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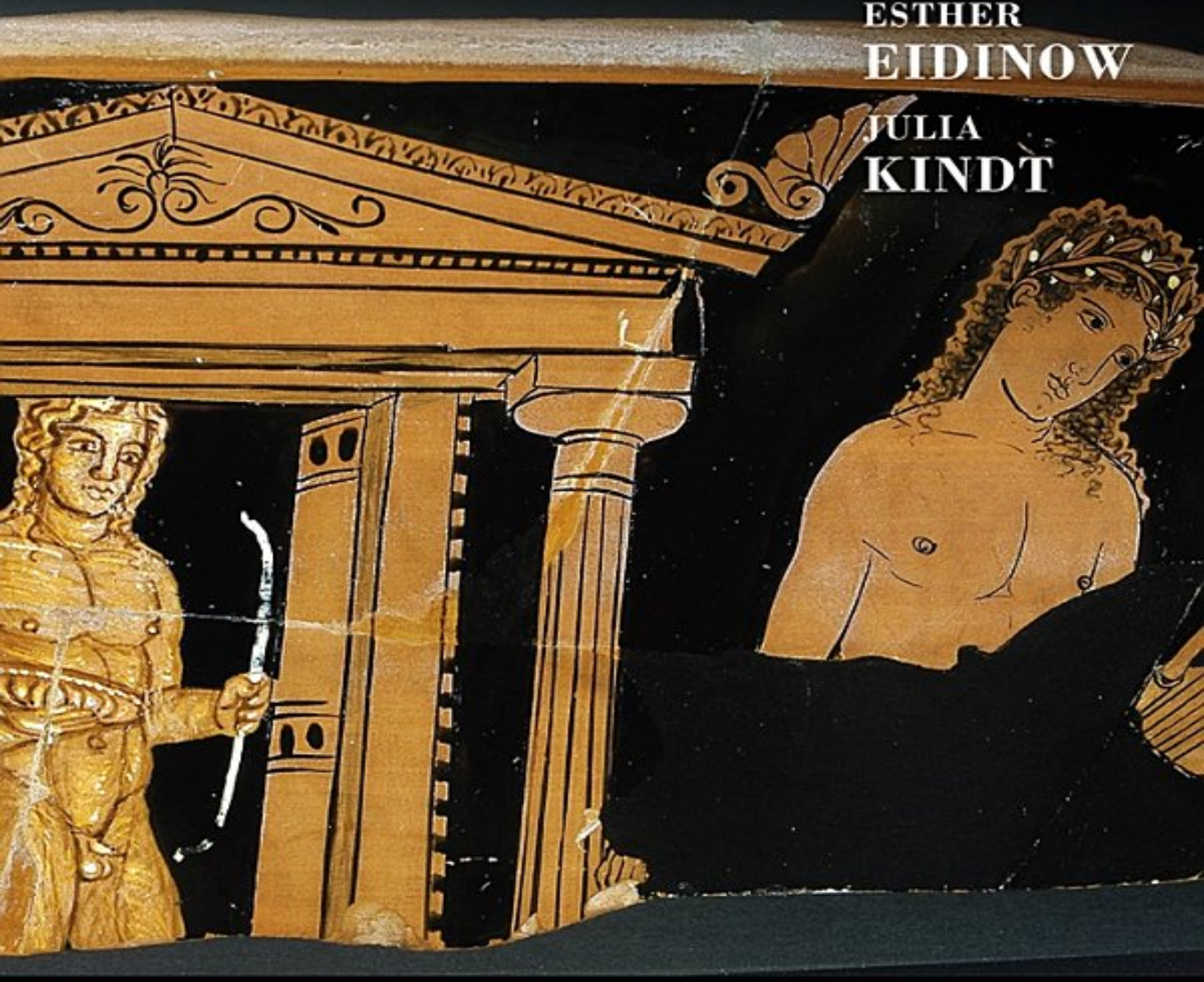

The Oxford Handbook *of* ANCIENT GREEK RELIGION

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

ANCIENT GREEK RELIGION

Edited by

ESTHER EIDINOW

and

JULIA KINDT

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Esther Eidinow
Julia Kindt

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

WE have used the Greek spelling of authors and names except in cases in which the Latinized spelling is more established.

For abbreviations of ancient authors and their works, please refer to S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, and E. Eidinow, eds. 2012. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 4th edn, Oxford; for journal abbreviations, please refer to *L'Année Philologique*; any other abbreviations used are listed below.

ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
APAAA	*Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association*
Buck	C. D. Buck. 1955. *The Greek Dialects*. Chicago.
CID	G. Rougemont et al. 1977–1992. Corpus des Inscriptions de Delphes. 3 vols.
CIRB	V. V. Struve. 1965. *Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bosporani*.
DDD	K. van der Toorne et al. eds. 1992. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*.
DT	A. Audollent. 1904. *Defixionum Tabellae*.
DTA	R. Wünsch. 1897. *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae*. *IG* vol. 3, pt. 3.
EAH	R. S. Bagnall et al. 2013. *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*. 13 vols.
EBGR	A. Chaniotis et al. 1987–. *Epigraphical Bulletin for Greek Religion*.
EDelph	*De E apud Delphos* (Plutarch).
Iscr.Cos	M. Segre. 1993. *Inscrizioni di Cos*. 2 vols.

I.Erythrai	H. Engelmann and R. Merkelbach. 1972–. *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai* (IK 1-2).
I.Iasos	W. Blümel. 1985. *Die Inschriften von Iasos*. 2 vols.
I.Knidos	W. Blümel. 1992. *Die Inschriften von Knidos* I.
IOSPE	V. Latysev. 1885–1916. *Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae*. 3 vols.
I.Lindos	Ch. Blinckenberg. 1941. *Lindos. Fouilles et recherches, II. Fouilles de l'acropole. Inscriptions*.
I.Milet	A. Rehm and P. Herrmann. 1997–8. *Inschriften von Milet*.
I.Perg	M. Fraenkel et al. 1890–5. *Die Inschriften von Pergamon*. 2 vols.
I.Stratonikeia	M.Ç. Sahin. 1981–90. *Die Inschriften von Stratonikeia*. 2 vols (IK 21–22).
JAS	*Journal of Asian Studies*
JRAI	*Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*
KSIA	*Kratkie Soobscheniia Instituta Arkheologii*
LfgrE	B. Snell et al. 1955–. *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*.
Lhôte	E. Lhôte. 2006. *Les lamelles oraculaires de Dodone*.
ML	R. Meiggs and D. Lewis. 1988. *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C. Oxford*.
NGCT	D. R. Jordan. 2000. 'New Greek Curse Tablets (1985–2000)', *GRBS* 41: 5–46
NGSL	E. Lupu. 2005. *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents* (2nd edn 2009).
OF	A. Bernabé. ed. 2004–6. *Poetae Epici Graeci II: Orphicorum et Orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta I–III*.
OHP	R. Bagnall. ed. 2009. *Oxford Handbook of*

	Papyrology.
RICIS	L. Bricault. 2005. *Recueil des inscriptions concernant les cultes isiaques*.
SGD	D. R. Jordan. 1985. ‘Survey of Greek Defixiones Not Included in the Special Corpora’, *GRBS* 26: 151–97.
SGDI	H. Collitz et. al. 1884–1915. *Sammlung der griechischen Dialektinschriften*. 4 vols.
Stud. Ir.	*Studia Iranica*
TM	Trismegistos. ‘An interdisciplinary portal of papyrological and epigraphical resources’. Project director M. Depauw. <http://www.trismegistos.org/>.
VDI	*Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*
Women—Church	*Women—Church. An Australian Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*

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INTRODUCTION

ESTHER EIDINOW AND JULIA KINDT

THIS handbook sets out to offer both students and teachers of ancient Greek religion a comprehensive overview of the current state of the field. It aims both to present key information about the subject, and to explore the ways in which this information is gathered, and the different approaches that have shaped the subject. Overall, we intend this volume not only to provide a research and orientation tool for students of the ancient world, but also to make a key contribution to the ongoing conceptualization of ancient Greek relationships to the supernatural—in all their variety.

The volume traces recent scholarship as it moves on from previous paradigms, such as 'polis religion', to a more broadly conceived conception of the religious in ancient Greek culture. 'Polis religion' has provided an extremely stimulating model, but tends to privilege certain official contexts of ritual activity while marginalizing others. Although the original model may not have intended this, its use too often results in a static and exclusive model of communal ritual practices, promoting, for example, a division between magical and religious ritual activities, and a focus on Athens in the Classical period. Even in accounts in which this model is not explicitly mentioned, the result has been the presentation of ancient Greek religion in terms of a neat and complete narrative rather than a field of contestation and change.

In contrast, the aim of this volume is to highlight crucial developments in the study of ancient Greek religion, with a special focus on problems and debates. Thus, the chapters in this volume emphasize the diversity of relationships between mortals and the supernatural—in all their manifestations, across, between, and beyond ancient Greek cultures—and the various contexts in which these relationships unfold. 'Relationships' include both physical manifestations (e.g. ritual) and metaphysical (e.g. discourses as evidence for beliefs)—and encompass sources that have traditionally been categorized as 'magic'. 'Contexts', in turn, include not only, where possible, the physical contexts, with a full consideration of the appropriate archaeological evidence, but also social, political, economic, and temporal contexts.

We have asked our authors to include information on approaches and methodologies, and on the history of scholarship in the field in their respective chapters, with the conviction that such information is best presented with the evidence it seeks to explain. We have not attempted to cover every possible topic in individual chapters, but rather to look at specific themes in the ritual contexts in which they occurred. For example, discussion of the content and context of hymns can be found in Henk Versnel's reflections on prayers and curses (Chapter 30), and in Claude Calame's meditation on the stories told in ritual performances (Chapter 13). The latter considers the ritual activities of women, a topic also discussed in, among other chapters, Matthew Dillon's consideration of the household as a location of ritual practice (Chapter 17), and, with a different emphasis, by Sarah Hitch's examination of evidence for life-change rituals (Chapter 35). In turn, Hitch's chapter also considers relevant conceptions of pollution: the dangers this poses for the community is discussed in Kostas Vlassopoulos' chapter on religion in Greek communities (Chapter 18); and the question of whether local heroes were perceived to cause pollution is explored in Gunnel Ekroth's chapter on heroes (Chapter 26). To help guide the reader to such relevant content, cross-references have been included throughout the handbook to illuminate overlapping themes between chapters and parts. Finally, we have asked our contributors to draw attention to religious activities as dynamic, highlighting how they changed over time and in response to different contexts and relationships.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Part I, 'What is Ancient Greek Religion?', consists of four slightly shorter chapters that set the scene for the contributions that follow. Each gives an overview of a key dimension of ancient Greek religion, drawing attention, in particular, to the ambiguities and apparent contradictions that emerge from the evidence, and emphasizing the need for modern scholarship to be aware of the assumptions and expectations of our heuristic categories.

In the first of these contributions, 'Unity vs. Diversity', Robin Osborne starts this volume by challenging the very term 'religion' itself. In its place, he succinctly evokes an ancient Greek 'theology of diversity', expressed in the range of ancient Greek ritual practices. Alongside ritual practice, Thomas Harrison sets the question of the nature of belief, describing in his chapter, 'Belief vs. Practice', how previous scholarship has struggled with this concept, and exploring some of the ways in which the problems it seems to pose may be re-approached. As these chapters indicate, and this volume as a whole emphasizes, neither belief nor practice remained static. The nature of change over time is the focus of Emily Kearns' reflections on the relationship between 'Old vs. New' across cult practice, gods, and religious concepts. She explores how innovation and continuity coexist, demonstrated by the chapter's case study on the mysteries of Andania. Finally, Vincianne Pirenne-Delforge and Gabriella Pironti delve further into the capacity for ancient Greek religion to encompass multiplicity: in 'Many vs. One', they examine the structure of polytheism, arguing that to understand ancient Greek gods, one must consider them to be simultaneously one and many, at every level of their cult.

The slightly longer contributions in the following parts draw on and exemplify such general considerations by exploring particular areas of ancient Greek religion. They typically start from a general introduction to the subject matter, followed by one to three case studies illustrating problems and questions discussed in the general part. However, this structure was not rigidly imposed, and throughout we have encouraged authors to adopt a style of presentation that best reflects the material presented. We start with two parts 'Types of Evidence' and 'Myths?

Contexts and Representations', which draw attention to questions of approach; this is followed by six thematic parts.

The six chapters that constitute Part II, 'Types of Evidence', introduce different kinds of sources available for the study of ancient Greek religion as well as the questions and problems pertaining to them. Milette Gaifman's contribution, 'Visual Evidence', introduces this part. She illustrates how a diverse body of imagery on vases, votive reliefs, and coins allows us to recover ancient religious beliefs and practices in a number of different contexts. She also argues that this kind of evidence should no longer be treated as secondary to the information gained through other sources, most notably, perhaps, from the literary evidence—the focus of the following two chapters. Prose texts come into focus in Hannah Willey's chapter on 'Literary Evidence—Prose'. Rhetorical uses of religion are explicitly included here to illustrate what is special about the way in which ancient Greek religion features in prose texts. Renaud Gagné's contribution, 'Literary Evidence—Poetry' takes up a point raised already in Gaifman's chapter: that in order to appreciate how a particular category of sources (in this case, poetry) reflects ancient Greek religion we need to study it in its own right first, before we relate it to information gained from other texts and contexts. Claire Taylor's chapter on 'Epigraphic Evidence', emphasizes the diversity of information on ancient Greek religion that can be gained from inscriptions, in particular if we appreciate them as both literary texts and material artefacts. In this way, her chapter already anticipates what Caitlín Barrett ('Material Evidence') shows with regard to the material evidence more generally: that context is key in the interpretation of the ancient evidence. It is, in particular, this significance of context which will emerge as a recurrent theme throughout later chapters and parts of this volume (see, e.g., in Chapter 26). The concluding chapter in Part II, David Martinez's essay on 'Papyrology' highlights the contribution different kinds of papyri make to the study of ancient Greek religion.

Part III of the handbook, 'Myth? Contexts and Representations', includes five chapters which are focused on those traditional narratives about gods and men that proved invariably central to ancient Greek religion (myth). It examines the different genres in which these stories appear, and the ways in which genre affects the presentation of these stories.

Richard Martin's contribution on 'Epic' stands at the beginning of this part. It investigates how religion is represented in epic narratives. This is related to the way in which the performance of epic poetry itself served as a ritual act, including both the composers and the audience. In his contribution on drama in the same part, Claude Calame makes a similar argument with regard to Greek tragedy, which also served as part of ritual practice. The chapter on 'Art and Imagery' by Tanja Scheer, in turn, considers the numerous visualizations of the divine the Greeks encountered in different social contexts, including the *oikos* and the polis. She suggests we take the difficult relationship between gods and their images as symptomatic of the nature of ancient Greek religion as such, which allowed for a spectrum of meanings and representations. In his chapter on 'History', Robert Fowler investigates the intersection of myth and history, understood here both as historical experience and as its representation (and transformation) in ancient historiography. From his chapter, the dialectic relationship between myth and history emerges as central to the development of the historiographic tradition from Herodotos to modern times. The following chapter, by Rick Benitez and Harold Tarrant on 'Philosophy', explores another dialectic relevant to ancient Greek religion, that between philosophical discourse and religious beliefs and practices. Yet while Fowler explored the dialectic between myth and history as a genuine duality in ancient Greek thought and literature, Benitez and Tarrant highlight how philosophy merely modified traditional religious beliefs and practices.

The parts that follow start from the simplest of questions—'Who?' 'Where?' 'What?' 'When?', and 'How?' These provide the central theme for the chapters they contain, each taking a particular perspective on that question.

In Part IV, 'Where?', the contributions consider a range of different places and spaces in which religious activities took place. In the first chapter, Chapter 16, Michael Scott reviews current debates about 'Temples and Sanctuaries'—what they were, and how they were placed, the roles they played in the wider landscape, and the experience of being in them—and discusses new approaches that explore them as multidimensional and polyvalent sacred spaces. Having established (and questioned) interpretations of sacred space, the next three chapters consider how different levels of ancient society interacted with it. Matthew Dillon's

chapter takes us into the household, with a particular focus on the role of women in and outside family-based religious activities. From families, we turn to the role and nature of 'Religion in Communities': Kostas Vlassopoulos evaluates the role of communal religious activity, both how it may have shaped Greek communities, and how it has been interpreted in scholarship, and how these two interact. Finally, Christy Constantakopoulou discusses Greek religious activity at the regional level: examining the management of cult centres and development of different kinds—and scales—of regional religious networks.

Part V offers contributions on the theme of 'How' the ancient Greeks approached religious activity, focusing in particular on the theme of control, and exploring the nature of religious authority and the variety of ways and arenas in which this was exercised. The first two chapters consider the nature of mortal and divine authority in ancient Greek religion. In 'Religious Expertise', Michael A. Flower examines the variety of religious experts, and their roles in different contexts. As he states, Greek priests did not mediate between gods and men/the city—and this raises questions about the ways in which religious decisions were made within a community. Ralph Anderson explores a key example of religious change in his chapter, 'New Gods': the ways in which communities regulated the transmission of new deities between, and their introduction into, poleis. This theme of regulation is pursued in the next two chapters. In 'Impiety' Hugh Bowden looks into the debate about the meaning of this term (*asebeia*) in ancient Greek legal discourse in particular. His analysis seeks to go beyond its characterization as either political or religious, and/or as a way in which the polis controlled the religious activities (or even beliefs) of its citizens. The question of modern categories is also central to Andrej Petrovic's chapter on 'Sacred Law', which reviews the many different forms, authorities, types of mediation, and enactment procedures of prescriptive texts concerning ancient Greek cults, and how this is prompting new work on the nature of cult regulation.

Part VI, 'Who?' considers the variety of supernatural entities at the core of ancient Greek religion. Most, but not all of the six chapters in this part are focused on a series of sharp contrasts that help to structure the multiplicity of supernatural entities in the ancient Greek world. Susan Deacy's chapter on 'Gods—Olympian vs. Chthonian', for example, is focused on the duality between Olympian and chthonian gods as one of the

most fundamental yet not unproblematic distinctions that structures the ancient Greek pantheon. The following chapter by Carolina López-Ruiz, ‘Gods—Origins’, revolves around a key question that has concerned much scholarship on ancient Greek religion in the past: the question of the origins of the Greek gods. However, rather than merely reiterating the traditional line about the origins of Greek divinity, López-Ruiz problematizes the question of origins itself by investigating its role in Greek religious discourse and in Classical scholarship. The question of origins is also flagged as important in the following chapter by Gunnel Ekroth on ‘Heroes—Living or Dead?’. She considers the special category of real or imagined human beings that, after their death, received quasi-divine honours, and explores the origins and transformations of hero-cults over time. Her case studies highlight again the plurality of ancient Greek religion and the dichotomy between life and death as different states of existence. Its significance for ancient Greek religion is considered more broadly by Emmanuel Voutiras in the following chapter, ‘Dead or Alive?’. Voutiras shows how a number of different rituals directed towards the dead reflect specifically Greek notions about life, death, and the afterlife. In this way he draws our attention towards the ambivalent role of the dead, which could remain powerful agents in the sphere of the living. The penultimate chapter in this part, by Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, ‘Daimonic Power’, gives a broad overview of the major transformations and developments in the ancient Greek conception of *daimons* from the Archaic to the Roman Imperial period. The final chapter by Ivana Petrovic ‘Deification—Gods or Men?’ concludes the investigation of intermediary powers in ancient Greek religion by focusing on the way in which the human–divine boundary is negotiated in processes of deification.

The five chapters collected in Part VII are focused entirely on different forms and contexts of human–divine interaction in the ancient Greek world. Hendrik S. Versnel’s chapter (‘Prayer and Curse’) starts off this part by pointing towards differences between ancient and modern conceptions of prayer (including hymns) and curse. His contribution introduces not only structurally different kinds of prayer and curse; it also shows that in the ancient Greek world there existed a number of intermediary forms which position themselves between prayer and curse. The following contribution by Fred Naiden (‘Sacrifice’) looks at what frequently features as the most fundamental ritual of ancient Greek religion: sacrifice, in

particular communal blood sacrifice. However, rather than embracing the traditional positions by Burkert and Vernant that have dominated debates in the past, Naiden urges us to apply a more differentiated and critical focus. He argues for a conception of sacrificial ritual that is both narrower and much broader than the traditional scholarly view, and challenges the usefulness of the term 'sacrifice' itself for the study of ancient Greek religion. Sarah Iles Johnston's chapter ('Oracles and Divination') draws our attention towards divination as another central form of human–divine interaction besides that of sacrifice. Human–divine contact, albeit of a direct, unmediated form, is also the subject of Verity Platt's chapter on 'Epiphany'. Like Johnston's contribution, Platt highlights the dangers resulting from human–divine interaction. Fritz Graf's chapter on 'Healing' concludes this part. His chapter shows that those undertaking healing rituals attempted to enlist the help of the gods to find a cure for diseases that the professional doctors could not provide, for example, through incubation.

The three chapters of Part VIII, 'When?', reflect on how Greek religion structures, and is structured by, conceptions and constructions of time. The first chapter ('From Birth to Death: Life-Change Rituals') examines the phenomenon of life-change rituals in ancient Greek society, and their interpretation in scholarship as 'initiations'. Sarah Hitch discusses some of the challenges being made to this approach, and demonstrates how the evidence may be read in other ways. She raises questions about the significance of conceptions of pollution that attend physiological changes, particularly those of women. Jan-Mathieu Carbon's chapter ('Ritual Cycles: Calendars and Festivals') asks us to imagine the ways in which religious ritual suffused everyday life, interacting with seasonal and agricultural rhythms as a way of reckoning the passing of time, and marking significant moments in the year. The final chapter of this part takes us to the time after death: in 'Imagining the Afterlife', Radcliffe G. Edmonds III describes the multiplicity of cultural imaginings about the afterlife, including the role of the intriguing 'Orphic tablets' as evidence for mystery cults designed to ensure participants received special favour after death. He evokes 'an ongoing contest of differing views', which should be thought of as 'jostling for authority' in particular situations.

In Part IX, the chapters ask whether and how aspects of the ritual and belief of ancient Greek culture—in all its diversity—shaped and was

shaped by interactions with local cultures beyond the confines of the Aegean basin. The first of these contributions, by Gillian Shepherd, considers Magna Graecia, which she defines as incorporating both Sicily and South Italy. These regions have produced archaeological material that perhaps most obviously indicates Greek influence. However, as Shepherd argues, this is not evidence for the simple replication of ritual practice and its artefacts. In this context, she considers the transfer of cult during processes of settlement, and the development and nature of *oikist* (founder) cults. From the Greek West, we turn North, for Maya Muratov's exploration of the evidence for Greek cult practice in the Northern Black Sea littoral. Often treated by scholars as a single entity, in fact, this region comprised three distinct areas: Olbia and its environs (well known for its cult of Achilles Pontarchos); Chersonese; and, the focus of this chapter, the Bosporan Kingdom. The latter area is increasingly recognized as important for scholars of Greek settlement in the Black Sea area, and this chapter examines current scholarship, much of which is written in Russian.

From North we turn East, with four chapters that look to increasingly distant cultures: Jan N. Bremmer examines the powerful influences of Near East myth and cult on ancient Greek religion, and how these were transmitted. He identifies two types of religious transfers: influences from Mesopotamian, Hurrian/Hittite, Phoenician, and Persian religious systems, and those from the epichoric religions, especially Luwian, Karian, Lykian, and Phrygian, which the Greeks who immigrated to Anatolia gradually included in their religious traditions. He draws particular attention to the disparate nature of these influences—and urges scholars to study both their geographical and social spread, and how they may have changed during this process. As Bremmer notes in his chapter, Egypt has sometimes been treated as a part of the Near East: here, interactions between Egyptian and Greek religious cultures (from the fifth century BCE to the second century CE) are explored in a separate chapter, by Kathrin Kleibl, focusing on Greco-Egyptian cult. Through detailed descriptions of the objects and organization of this cult, with particular emphasis on evidence for the mysteries of Isis, Kleibl explores the authority and appeal of the cult to its followers; she argues that they entered what was in effect 'a parallel world' that achieved 'an effect of absolute power'. Before leaving this eastern orientation, Rachel Mairs' chapter explores the

evidence for connections with Greeks and Greekness in the diverse cult activities of ‘the Hellenistic Far East’, that is, the Hellenistic kingdoms of Bactria and India. She explains how ‘Greek cults were only part of the religious constellation of the region’, and emphasizes the different purposes to which religious images and practices might be put. The final chapter takes us to China, raising questions not of cultural influence but of cultural comparison. Lisa Raphals considers the similarities and differences to be found between ancient Greek and ancient Chinese cultures, regarding cosmogony and cosmology; relations and distinctions between gods and humans; and the scope and nature of divinatory practices.

Overall, the structure of this handbook reflects the conviction of the editors that ‘ancient Greek religion’ presents us with a complex subject, itself raising questions as well as providing answers about ancient society. We very much hope that the chapters here prove useful for opening up debates and encouraging further study in one of the most vibrant areas of scholarship on the ancient world.

PART I

WHAT IS ANCIENT GREEK RELIGION?

CHAPTER 1

UNITY VS. DIVERSITY

ROBIN OSBORNE

INTRODUCTION

THE term ‘religion’ cannot be translated into Greek. The Greeks knew that different people worshipped different gods and did so in different ways. They also knew that worship of different gods or use of different names for the gods tended to correlate with different cult organization and practice. But no Greek writer known to us classifies either the gods or the cult practices into separate ‘religions’. Modern scholars who talk of *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Price 1999) are applying a modern category in a modern way; whether or not this is other than highly misleading is arguable.

The absence of ‘religions’, as far as the Greeks were concerned, was a matter of theology. The gods were not local in their interests or powers: they held sway over the whole world. This is well brought out by the epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which stand at the head of the Greek poetic tradition (on the Homeric gods, see Kearns 2004). The war between Greeks and Trojans that provides the background for the *Iliad* is not a war between Greek gods and Trojan gods: the same Olympian deities are

involved on both sides and both sides seek to acquire the favour of the same gods by exactly parallel cult practices, by dedication of precious objects, and by making costly animal sacrifices (cf. *Iliad* 6.286ff.). Potentially, the different gods with their different interests cancel each other out. But the universality of the interests of each of the gods means that they can be distracted. In some circumstances (as famously in *Iliad* 14.153–353 when Hera beguiles Zeus) it is events among the gods themselves that distract them. But at the beginning of the *Odyssey* the other gods are able to work out a way of getting Odysseus back home to Ithaka while Poseidon, who is the god who opposes him, is away taking his pleasure at a feast among the Aithiopians, who have sacrificed a hecatomb of bulls and rams to him.

There was no limit to the variety of the gods. Although there was some sense that there was a privileged set of twelve 'Olympian' gods, adding further gods was never problematic and the twelve Olympians could be worshipped under any variety of epithets. There was also no limit to the number of different stories that might be told about the gods and about their relations to each other. Right at the beginning of the extant poetic tradition, Hesiod, in his *Theogony*, attempts to impose some order on the gods by arranging them in a dynasty. Various other Archaic Greek writers tried out their own versions subsequently, but there was never a canonical reference text (see West 1966: 12–16 on what we know of other Greek theogonies). Greeks were very tolerant of alternative stories about how the gods related to one another, and even about their divine status itself.

A THEOLOGY OF DIVERSITY

When the Greeks became familiar with other peoples and their gods they either recognized their own gods in those other gods or added a new god to the pantheon (on new gods see, this volume, Anderson, Chapter 21, and the chapters in Part IX). The most important witness here is Herodotos, who, in surveying the peoples of the Persian empire comments on their cult practices as well as on other aspects of their lives (Harrison 2000). His

description of Persian practice (1.131) gives a good indication of the way in which he deals with divergent religious practice:

> I know that the Persians have the following customs: they do not make it their custom to set up statues of the gods and temples and altars, but they bring mockery upon those who do so, in my view because they do not consider the gods to be in human form, as the Greeks do. Their custom is to make sacrifice to Zeus, climbing up the highest of the mountains, and they call the whole sphere of the heavens Zeus. They also sacrifice to the sun, moon, earth, fire, water and winds. In the beginning these were the only gods they sacrificed to, but they have been taught to sacrifice to Heaven, learning it from the Assyrians and Arabians. The Assyrians call Aphrodite Mylitta, the Arabians call her Alilat, the Persians Mitra.

Herodotos is quite happy here to identify the gods as the same despite their being envisaged quite differently, and seems not worried at all by the almost complete divergence of cult practice (he goes on to point out that their sacrifices involve none of the paraphernalia normal in Greek sacrifices, no altar, no fire, no libation, no music, no garlands, no barley grains).

Not only is the recognition of gods as the ‘same’ not prevented by divergent beliefs and cult practices, there is no sense in Herodotos’ discussion that the way in which the Greeks worship the gods is the proper way, from which divergence elsewhere constitutes degradation. Indeed, famously, Herodotos reckons that the Greeks, far from coming first, got their ideas about the gods from the Egyptians (2.4):

> They [the Egyptians] were accustomed to say that the Egyptians were the first to establish the names of the gods and that the Greeks took up the names from them, and they were also the first to assign altars, statues, and temples to the gods and to carve images in stone.

Later (2.43), he claims to have a great deal of evidence that the Greeks got the name of Herakles from Egypt, and quotes the Egyptians as claiming that the Twelve Gods descended from the Eight Gods 17,000 years before the reign of Amasis in the sixth century BCE. This puts the Egyptian gods in a quite different league from the Greek gods, for Herodotos goes on to say (2.53) that it was Homer and Hesiod who supplied the Greeks with the gods’ family tree, names, roles, attributes, and forms, and that Homer and Hesiod lived 400 years before his own time (in fact, about a 30 per cent overestimate).

One further feature of Herodotos’ discussion is worth noting. He not only allows that cult practices and so on may differ from ethnic group to ethnic group, but that there may be differences of practice even within an

ethnic group. So, of the Egyptians, he observes explicitly that certain sacrificial practices are universal across all Egypt (2.40, 41), but that, with the exception of Isis and Osiris, not all Egyptians worship the same gods in the same way (2.42).

The importance of Herodotos is less as an authority—he had a rather mixed reputation in antiquity when it came to reliability—than as a witness to the sorts of ways in which Greek intellectuals (at least) thought about the gods. The willingness that he displays to recognize among non-Greek peoples the gods worshipped by the Greeks, regardless of their names and the fact that the ways of worshipping them were quite different, is reflected by the Greeks' own variety of ways of referring to and worshipping 'the same' gods.

Take the matter of naming the gods. Names were important, for if sacrifices, dedications, and prayers were to win favour they needed to be recognized by the god to whom they were offered. But Greek gods were worshipped under many names: not only were epithets regularly added to the name of a god (Apollo Karneios, Apollo Delios, Apollo Delphinios, Apollo Lykios, Apollo Nomios, Apollo Pythios, Apollo Smintheus, and so on), but gods might have alternative names—Dionysos is also Bacchus. Scholars have sometimes taken the view that Greeks considered names powerful, and that getting the name right was needed to make a god do what one wanted. Indeed, in a classic formulation, Fraenkel (1950, vol. 2: 100; on Aischylos' *Agamemnon* 160) wrote, 'To know the name of a daemon is to acquire power over him (*Ei wie gut dass niemand Weiss, dass ich Rumpelstilzchen heiss*).' But although the idea of the name of God as powerful is familiar in Jewish religion, as far as the Greeks go, at least, this seems to be a misunderstanding. The emphasis in Greek formulations is not on getting the name of the god right but in calling the god by the name that pleases them most—as Plato explicitly puts it in *Kratylos* (400e), 'In our prayers it is customary for us to pray that we may call them by the names and places of origin that they themselves rejoice in' (Pulleyn 1997: ch. 6).

The important theological point here is that, for the Greeks, their gods were at the same time universal, found everywhere and powerful over the whole world, and intensely local, manifesting themselves in particular places, both in the support they gave for particular groups and individuals and through actual epiphanies. Gods were recognized to be present in

different ways in different places—so Apollo inspires the Pythia to produce oracular statements at Delphi, but his sanctuary at Delos was not an oracle. Sanctuaries certainly traded on the fact that they had long been recognized as places where making offerings to a specific god was particularly effective. But it was equally possible for a god to be invoked in any place or circumstance. One particularly nice illustration of this comes in Herodotos' story of Ladike from Kyrene, wife of Amasis, who, threatened with death because of Amasis' impotence, prays to Aphrodite 'in her mind' and, as it appears, in bed with Amasis (Hdt. 2.181).

Similarly, although religious expertise was recognized—Oedipus has Teiresias summoned for his religious expertise and Kreon is depicted as having followed Teiresias' guidance, Euthyphro's father goes to consult an *exegetes*, the Athenian assembly listens to suggestions made by the seer Lampon—there was nothing for which religious experts were needed (Soph. *OT* 284–6, *Ant*. 992–3, 1058–9; Pl. *Euthphr*. 4c–d; ML 73. 47–61). Not only could even animal sacrifice be performed without a priest—a fifth-century inscription from Chios explicitly lays down that if the priest is not present the person wanting to sacrifice should call out three times and then do it himself (Sokolowski 1962: 129 ll.7–11; cf. RO 27. 27–8)—but no training was needed to become a priest in the first place. Although priesthoods were regularly restricted to those in a particular family (*genos*), the Athenians democratized some new priesthoods by allotting them from all Athenians of the appropriate gender, and, subsequently, cities frequently put priesthoods up for sale.

RITUAL VARIATION

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when we look at descriptions of cult practice or prescriptions for cult practice in particular places we find extremely wide variation. Take what is often thought of as the central cult act, animal sacrifice. Scholars often present a composite picture of what animal sacrifice involved (e.g. Burkert 1985: 55–7), derived largely from Homeric descriptions (e.g. Hom. *Od*. 3.4–66; see further in this volume, Naiden, Chapter 31), but there is no reason to think that there was, in fact,

a paradigmatic sacrificial ritual (cf. Bremmer 2007). In different places different animals were killed in different ways and different things were done with the resulting meat—which might variously be totally burned up ('holocaust' sacrifices, usually of piglets), cooked and compulsorily consumed on the spot, taken away for consumption at home, or sold. Priests were regularly rewarded with part of the sacrificed animal, but not always with the same part. And sometimes something quite different was done.

An extreme example of variance is provided by the sacrifices to Artemis Laphria at Patras. We know about these sacrifices only from Pausanias, who mentions in his discussion of Messene (4.31.7–8) that the Messenians and the people of Patras alone received the cult of Artemis Laphria from Kalydon in Aitolia, and then gives a full description of the major cult act at the sanctuary at Patras in his discussion of that city (7.18). According to that description, for the festival of the Laphria they pile up wood round the altar and then people bring birds, 'all sorts of sacrificial victims', wild boar, deer, wolf, and bear cubs. They then set fire to the wood and prevent any beasts escaping.

This sacrifice breaks all the normal rules. The animals here are killed by burning, rather than being killed before being cooked. Rather than the victims being killed singly, they are killed as a group. The victims include wild animals, which are not normally sacrificed. Although all this is odd, none of it is completely unheard of. Pausanias stresses the 'foreignness' of the name Laphria and the cult image at Patras—but foreign here turns out to mean from central Greece. It happens that excavation at the sanctuary of Artemis and Apollo at Kalapodi in Phokis in central Greece has now revealed faunal evidence for the sacrifice of wild animals—boar and deer—there. Pausanias also (10.32.14–17) knows of a festival at Tithorea, also in Phokis, where oxen, deer, geese, and guinea fowl are burnt on a pyre. Lucian, in his work *On the Syrian Goddess* (49), reports a sacrifice at Hierapolis in which trees are set up in the sanctuary, goats, sheep, and birds are hung up alive from the trees, and then the whole is set alight (Lightfoot 2003: 500–6). Whether one of these festivals influenced another is not important, what is important is that these forms of sacrifice, though found notable by Greek observers coming from elsewhere, were within the bounds of possible sacrificial activity.

Visitors did not have to examine the small print of sacred laws, however, or wait to see through a whole year's calendar of festivals in order to appreciate the variety of cult practice. That variety was written large in the physical appearance of the sanctuaries. This applies to their buildings, their visible history, and, above all, to their votives.

There was probably no single physical feature common to all sanctuaries. Even the altar, which might be thought fundamental, could be absent—various famous sanctuaries, including those of Zeus at Olympia and on Mount Lykaion, had altars formed only from the accumulation of ash and other debris from historic sacrifices. Images of the god were regular, but not universal, and temples might take a wide variety of sizes and shapes, or might be absent altogether (see further in this volume, Scott, Chapter 16). Equally, there was probably no sort of building or monument that could not be found in a sanctuary. Sanctuaries variously included theatres, facilities for games, stoas, dining rooms, caves and artificial underground rooms, spaces for public gatherings, spaces for private initiation ceremonies, art galleries, treasuries, rooms for sleeping in, workshops—everything, perhaps, apart from private houses. This range of features gave sanctuaries an extremely diverse appearance. This is only to be expected, given the way in which virtually all human cultural activities could be, and regularly were, seen to relate to the gods and incorporated within human life (it was the natural activities, birth, death, sex, that were more problematic; Parker 1983: chs 2 and 3).

The different structures visible in different sanctuaries related to the particular activities that went on there. Different sanctuaries were visited by various groups at different frequencies and for varying purposes. Some sanctuaries attracted small family or other cult groups only occasionally. Some sanctuaries attracted enormous crowds occasionally for their major festivals. Other sanctuaries attracted groups of individuals, whether, for example, individuals looking for healing by spending a night sleeping in a sanctuary or those who had come to ask some particular question of an oracular god (see further in this volume, Iles Johnston, Chapter 32, and Graf, Chapter 34). Those who gathered in sanctuaries variously came to do something or to be spectators. Some came to sanctuaries because festivals were an opportunity to meet others, including for purposes of courtship. Others came to sanctuaries because they were places to get away from the rest of the world, places of asylum. Many came to sanctuaries expecting to

feast there, but in some festivals, at least, there were days when those who came were expected to fast there (the Athenian Thesmophoria included a day actually called Nesteia, or ‘fasting day’). On some occasions the whole sacrificial animal was burnt up, leaving no meat for the worshippers (see Jameson 1999).

The various activities in different sanctuaries left varying traces, not just accidentally but on purpose. In particular, many came to sanctuaries in order to give the god or goddess a gift. The variety of gifts had few absolute limits. Plato in *Laws* (955e–956b) suggests that, in his ideal city, there would be a ban on dedications made of ivory, because ivory is culled from a dead animal, on iron and bronze because they are used for weapons of war, and on gold and silver because they encourage envy. Many Greek sanctuaries teemed with gold and silver, and from an early date ivory was plentiful; moreover, while shields and other elements of armour may have outnumbered offensive weapons, there are plenty of spear heads to be found and Persian swords had a proud place on the Athenian Acropolis (Harris 1995). But Plato’s thoughts in this passage were not thoughts that no one had previously entertained. We have a series of regulations from sanctuaries in the Peloponnese which limit or ban jewellery or fancy clothing—though it is striking that, in some cases, the penalty for offending is precisely to dedicate the item in question (so *LSCG* 68; Parker 1983: 82–3). And there is sensitivity too about leather, unless from sacrificial beasts (*LSCG* 65.22–3).

LOCAL CUSTOMS

It was not primarily regulations that dictated what was to be found in a sanctuary, but local custom. It is very unlikely that any authority had ever prescribed the dedication of statues of naked young men (*kouroi*) at the sanctuary of Apollo Ptoios near Akraiphnion in Boiotia, but by the time of the Persian Wars a visitor to that temple would be met by a forest of more than a hundred *kouroi* (Ducat 1971). That this was a sanctuary of Apollo clearly played some part in attracting dedications of this form—the sanctuary of Athena on the Athenian Acropolis attracted a large number of

statues of young maidens (*korai*) but few *kouroi*. But other Apollo sanctuaries—including the wealthy Delphi and Delos sanctuaries—were much less heavily populated with these petrified young men. What has emerged from the study of votives from different sanctuaries in the same place receiving dedications during the same period is that both particular location (down by the harbour, up on the acropolis) and the perceived personality of the deity involved played a part in determining what was dedicated. So the two sanctuaries at Emborio on Chios from which votives have been excavated yield, in one case (the Athena sanctuary on the acropolis), dedications that celebrate fulfilment of civic expectations, and, in the other case (the Harbour sanctuary), dedications that flag up links with the outside world and the possibility of procuring 'exotic' items (Morgan 1990: 230–2).

The distinctiveness of the individual sanctuary, whether in its buildings or its votives, reflects the distinctive character projected on to the Greek gods by their worshippers. Greek communities worshipped the gods they considered themselves to need in the places and ways they thought would best fulfil that need. There was a constant dialogue between the image of a god received from past generations and the imagination of current worshippers. This dialogue was carried on through material gestures as well as through words—both were intended to persuade other humans and the god himself or herself of the style of human life that god should be considered to support. The tradition of past generations, like the accumulation of customary practice, whether expressed in 'law' or not, only ever provided the starting point for a new generation's rewriting of their relationship with a particular god.

For all the homeostatic development of religious thought and cult, it remains true that, notwithstanding the historic and geographical diversity to be found in Greek religious practice, it was not the case that anyone could do anything and have it regarded by fellow Greeks as acceptable religious behaviour. Part of the diversity was itself the product of different prohibitions. Sanctuaries put up regulations prohibiting particular practices as readily as they put up regulations as to what was to happen. A fine example is provided by a fifth-century regulation from the sanctuary of Herakles on Thasos: 'To Thasian Herakles it is not permitted (to sacrifice) goat or pig. And not for a woman. And no ninths are given. And no perquisites are cut. And no games' (*IG* XII, suppl. 414). In this

sanctuary what could be sacrificed, who could be involved, how precisely the victim was treated (the practice of dividing off a ninth share to be burnt entire), and what other activities went on are all subject to strict control (on sacred laws, see in this volume, Petrovic, Chapter 23).

Scholars have noted that it is absolutely standard for the prohibitions, and other sacred laws, to cite no authority, by contrast to other city laws that record how they came to be agreed (Parker 2004). If authority was needed for the regulation of cult practice then it had to come from the gods themselves, through an oracle (most commonly Apollo's oracle at Delphi, a 'central' authority in a very literal sense given Delphi's claim to be the navel of the earth). Some regulations do indeed invoke Apollo as authority (as, for example, does the great fourth-century regulation about purification from Kyrene, RO 97), and religious practices were one of the main things about which cities consulted oracles. (Despite Bowden's claims to the contrary, this is well borne out by the list of Athenian consultations in Bowden 2005: app. 2.) But although oracles might settle local practice when major changes were introduced, or when there was some local dispute, in most cases there is no sign that those in charge of a sanctuary considered that they needed any outside sanction before imposing a particular practice. Polytheism and political fragmentation together guaranteed that there was no central religious authority.

But for all the absence of a central authority, there were practices that no one engaged in; human sacrifice for one. For all that there are stories of human sacrifice told both about the mythical and about the historical past, no cult rules required human sacrifice. The nature of the stories shows that they are precisely parading the boundaries of what could, in any circumstances, be accepted (Hughes 1991, esp. ch. 4). In part, the issue here was theological: sanctuaries were places where the ultimate power of the gods had to be respected—even non-sacrificial killing in a sanctuary was problematic (for example, the deaths of Kylon and Pausanias, Thuc. 1.126, 134; cf. 128). Even for someone to die of natural causes in a sanctuary was regarded as improper (Parker 1983: ch. 2).

Almost equally unacceptable was sex in sanctuaries. The question of whether there was sacred prostitution anywhere in the ancient world, and in particular whether claims made about Corinth by Pindar (fr. 122) and Strabo (8.6.20) constitute evidence for sacred prostitution in the Greek world has been much debated (Beard and Henderson 1998; Budin 2008).

But it is clear that part of what generated stories of sacred prostitution, both within the Greek world and outside it (cf. e.g. Hdt. 1.99; Strabo 11.14.16, 16.1.20; Lucian *Syr. D.* 6; Eusebius *Vit. Const*. 3.55) was precisely the absolute prohibition on sexual intercourse within sanctuaries, a prohibition featured in stories as well as in sacred laws and identified by Herodotos (2.64.1) as peculiar to Greeks and Egyptians (Parker 1983: 73–5). One of the earliest regulations that we have from a sanctuary, that of Zeus at Olympia, is concerned exclusively with fornication (Buck 64). Herodotos ends his history with the story of Artayktes having sex in the sanctuary of Protesilaos at Elaious (9.116.3; cf. 7.33). That giving birth in sanctuaries was also thought improper (RO 102.5, Thuc. 3.104) is presumably related.

CONCLUSION

What the examples of human sacrifice and sexual intercourse show is not simply that what might be included in cult activity had its limits, but that those limits came to be identified as characteristic of what it was to be Greek. What was at stake here was not primarily a matter of theology: on the one hand, the Greeks were prepared to think that gods might indeed ordain human death or even require human sacrifice, on the other, they allowed infringement of the no-sex rule, like infringement of other local rules, to be rectified by paying a fine and making a sacrifice. These fundamental and shared expectations about not doing certain things in sanctuaries were rather a matter of defining one's distinctive moral stature in the wider world. If the diversity of Greek religion is as great as the diversity of Greek poleis, its unity is the unity that underlay the claim that the world of the polis was Greek.

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CHAPTER 2

BELIEF VS. PRACTICE

THOMAS HARRISON

IN a splendid passage of his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, Robertson Smith argued trenchantly that, in approaching ancient religions, it was necessary to rid oneself of assumptions based on Christianity (Smith 1894: 16–7; for Smith, see e.g. Bell 1997: 261–2; Naiden 2013: 4–9). Hitherto, he observed, the study of religion had been the study of Christian beliefs, with religious duties 'flowing from the dogmatic truths [the learner] is taught to accept':

> All this seems to us so much a matter of course that, when we approach some strange or antique religion, we naturally assume that here also our first business is to search for a creed, and find in it the key to ritual and practice. But the antique religions had for the most part no creed; they consisted entirely of institutions and practices. No doubt men will not habitually follow certain practices without attaching a meaning to them; but as a rule we find that while the practice was rigorously fixed, the meaning attached to it was extremely vague, and the same rite was explained by different people in different ways, without any question of orthodoxy or heterodoxy arising in consequence. In ancient Greece, for example, certain things were done at a temple, and people were agreed that it would be impious not to do them. But if you had asked why they were done, you would probably have had several mutually contradictory explanations from different persons, and no one would have thought it a matter of the least religious importance which you chose to adopt. Indeed the explanations offered would not have been of a kind to stir any strong feeling; for in most cases they would have been merely different stories as to the circumstances under which the rite first came to be established, by the command or by the direct example of the god. The rite, in short, was connected not with a dogma but with a myth. . . . Belief

> in a certain series of myths was neither obligatory as a part of true religion, nor was it supposed that, by believing, a man acquired religious merit and conciliated the favour of the gods. What was obligatory or meritorious was the exact performance of certain sacred acts prescribed by religious tradition.

These profound differences in ancient religion, as Smith perceived them, were fundamental, then, to the approach that he adopted. Since 'ritual and practical usage were, strictly speaking, the sum total of ancient religions' (Smith 1894: 20), he took as his starting point the institutions of religion, delaying discussion of metaphysical questions. In so doing, of course—and in his sharp distinctions between doctrine or dogma, on the one hand, and practice on the other—he found confirmation for his starting position.

Smith's distinctions between Christian and ancient religions, and between belief and practice, also served another purpose, however: that of preserving his own Christian faith from criticism. The story of the *Religion of the Semites* is of an evolution, a gradual breaking free of the 'spiritual truth' from the 'husk of a material embodiment', as his discussion of ancient sacrifice as a sacramental act of communion makes clear (Smith 1894: 439–40):

> In primitive ritual this conception is grasped in a merely physical and mechanical shape, as indeed, in primitive life, all spiritual and ethical ideas are still wrapped up in the husk of a material embodiment. To free the spiritual truth from the husk was the great task that lay before the ancient religions, if they were to maintain the right to continue to rule the minds of men. That some progress in this direction was made, especially in Israel, appears from our examination. But on the whole it is manifest that none of the ritual systems of antiquity was able by mere natural development to shake itself free from the congenital defect inherent in every attempt to embody spiritual truth in material forms. A ritual system must always remain materialistic, even if its materialism is disguised under the cloak of mysticism.

The 'personal faith' of Christianity, by contrast, lay 'too deep to be touched by criticism . . .', as Smith wrote in an early essay of 1869; 'no attack on the Gospel history can have such a personal weight as is at all comparable to the Christian's conviction of the reality of the historical Christ' (Smith 1912: 134).

Many aspects of Robertson Smith's thinking—his sharp opposition between belief and practice, his commitment to liberate the study of ancient religion from Christianizing assumptions—have continued to structure the study of Greek religion to this day. Especially perhaps in the last quarter of the twentieth century, leading scholars of Greek (and Roman) religion habitually defined their subject in terms of sharp

contrasts, the absence in antiquity of phenomena considered central to Christianity—in the phrase of Robert Garland (1994: ix) a 'negative catechism'. So, for example: 'Practice not belief is the key, and to start from questions about faith or personal piety is to impose alien values on ancient Greece' (Price 1999: 3; cf. Price 1984: 3, 11); 'What mattered was the performance of cult acts, not the state of mind of the actor' (Osborne 1994: 144); 'Greek religion may then fairly be said to be ritualistic in the sense that it was the opposite of dogmatic' (Osborne 1994: 144); and so on.

At the same time, however, the intellectual background to Robertson Smith's formulation has, in many respects, evaporated. Few would now share his underlying model of an evolutionary development culminating in (a distinctively Protestant) Christianity. More broadly, Christianity has, in so many areas of Western society, receded to the point that it is scarcely any longer a meaningful point of comparison—to the extent that a Church of England vicar making a home visit might plausibly be thought more likely to be a stripper (Mackley 2014). New approaches in scholarship, moreover, from social anthropology and the 'cognitive science of religion' (see e.g. Sørensen 2005), have emphasized the very large gulf that exists in 'credal' religions between the formal doctrinal position and the beliefs manifested in everyday 'online' contexts, and the inability of those charged with doctrinal consistency to assert any meaningful control. The tragedy of the theologian, for Pascal Boyer, is that 'there always seem to be some nonstandard beliefs and practices left sticking out' (Boyer 2001: 281; cf. Tremlin 2006: 92, 96, 161, 163, 171).

The fact, then, that some religions 'define themselves through dogmas and orthodoxy' (King 2003: 283), the question of the presence or absence of a 'creed' in any religious system, while still undoubtedly a significant factor, becomes markedly less central. And the way is opened up for an approach which—rather than being based on a series of negative contrasts taken as given—is more openly comparative.

In particular also—in parallel to the decentring of the polis as the defining focus of Greek religion, a model which both depended upon and reinforced the emphasis on ritual (see esp. Kindt 2012)—'belief' has made a comeback, albeit a partial one. Objections to the term 'belief' (when applied to Greek religion, or more generally) can broadly be said to belong to two overarching families. The first, made in elaborate detail in the

classic discussion of Rodney Needham, focuses on the difficulty of translation between cultures: put simply, the lack of any clear or stable vocabulary in a range of languages, ancient and modern, equivalent to 'belief', the lack of any concept of belief (Needham 1972). In the Greek context, skirmishes have focused on the expression *nomizein tous theous*: a phrase translated variously as to 'acknowledge the existence of the gods', to 'worship the gods according to cultic tradition' or (smudging the issue) as 'accept the gods in the normal way' (Versnel 2011: 552–4, 554–8; Parker 2011: 36). It is clear that any attempt to find neat equivalents for such a concept in foreign languages would be a fruitless one; such terms and concepts have complex histories in any language (Needham 1972: ch. 3; cf. Smith 1977). But, as Henk Versnel has argued compellingly, though the effort to describe the range of ('emic') concepts available to a historical people may still be an important one, it is no block to our additionally describing the same people in our own ('etic') terms (cf. Versnel 2011: app. IV, esp. 548–51).

The other main family of objections—following on from Robertson Smith—focuses on perceived differences between ancient and modern religions, and in particular on the suggestion (supposedly) implicit in the term 'belief' of an emphasis on spiritual commitment, or on assent to a set of propositional beliefs (Price 1984: 10–11). Does 'belief', however, necessarily have such implications? More recently, distinctions have been drawn between different meanings or levels of belief: between a 'high-intensity' Christian usage (belief as a deliberate commitment, adherence to a set of dogmas, etc.) and an alternative 'low-intensity' usage (belief as in common parlance), or between 'Belief' and 'belief' (Harrison 2000: 18–23; Versnel 2011: 548).

If we were to accept that Christian religion could not in fact be reduced to a set of credal propositions any more than ancient polytheism (cf. Versnel 2011: 552), then we might nuance this distinction further. In place of our distinction between high-intensity and low-intensity belief, we might instead distinguish between an (emic) Christian perspective, the Christian (or just *one* Christian) ideal of personal spiritual commitment, on the one hand, and, on the other, the reality of Christian belief and practice; or we might distinguish between the different *value* placed on belief in different contexts (Feeney 1998: 13). (Ironically, even as we have tried to free ancient religion from Christianizing assumptions, we may

have privileged a distinctively Christian ideal of belief—one with its own history; see here Asad 1993: 27–54.)

If we look only for 'high-intensity' belief in the Greek world, it is no surprise if we find it to be scarce. (It has been well pointed out, however, that the discourse of 'unbelief' in the Greek world suggests the capacity to conceptualize its reverse, for 'How can one person deny the (existence of) the gods unless (all) others *do* believe that they exist?': Versnel 2011: 553.) If we widen the search, however, we are rewarded with evidence from a wide range of sources—from oratory, historiography, drama, epigraphy, as well as art—reflecting ideas, for example, concerning oracles and divination, the justice (or injustice) of the divine, the presence of an afterlife, or the reasons for propitiating the divine.

The existence of some such level of 'low-intensity' belief is now indeed sometimes presented as self-evident: '[Surely] even a ritual is performed in the belief that there was some purpose in doing it' (Parker 2011: 2). 'One worships the gods', in Robert Parker's words, 'because, experience shows, benefit derives from doing so. The gods are there. At this very basic level there is indeed belief, a belief very generally shared, or at least feigned, and in social terms not wholly safe to repudiate' (Parker 2011: 32; cf. Linder and Scheid 1993: 53–4; Versnel 2011: 552).

There is a danger, however, that religious belief here is seen, primarily or exclusively, as a kind of penumbra to ritual action. Our sources, however, unquestionably give us more than just 'different stories' of the origins of rites (to use Robertson Smith's phrase) and, indeed, in many cases they are not concerned with rites at all. A stronger formulation than that of Parker, for example, has it that while we might 'conceive of beliefs which are not put into ritual', there is no 'ritual which is not grounded in a set of beliefs' (Naerebout 1997: 329; cf. 335–6 on rituals without meaning). Rituals cannot simplistically be decoded with the use of a corresponding belief, but they are nonetheless 'enactments of meaning'.

Even then if you accept that beliefs do not necessarily stand in a clear, subservient relationship to ritual action, there is another hazard: that they are seen simply as secondary in terms of importance. (A parallel danger is that the more clearly mediated evidence of literature is seen as simply less substantial than 'real religion', whatever that might be: Harrison 2007: 374.) 'One way of mediating', in the words of Parker again, 'between those for whom Greek religion is a matter of things done at or near an

altar, and those for whom it is rather the sum of the stories, speculations, and appeals just mentioned, is to argue that, though beliefs were held, only acts were subject to appeal' (Parker 2011: 2; cf. 33–4). But must we then privilege things done over things said or thought?

Can we go further than our distinction between two levels of belief, high- and low-intensity? How should we understand belief? 'A man is said to believe a thing', wrote Robertson Smith, 'when he cannot prove it, but has got something towards a proof' (1912: 111). Belief, in this sense, is usually seen as a conscious act of assent, or as a free and responsible decision of the will. It is also inseparably connected to an idea of the truth of what is—even if the believer may decide to withhold his assent or if the idea asserted is untrue (Needham 1972: 80). However, as Robertson Smith went on to argue (very much from the position of a believer himself), this idea of belief as conscious assent, or as a 'hypothesis that [I feel] bound to accept till further facts turn up *pro*, or *con*', sits uncomfortably even with Christianity (1912: 111):

> if so, whence the moral warmth that mingles with our discussion of Christianity? Why are we eagerly apologetic in behalf of a hypothesis? What interest can we have to maintain this hypothesis more than any other which will suit the facts equally well? I am sure no Christian would feel that a hypothetical Christianity was worth having.

A series of alternative definitions of belief seek to capture this broader aspect: belief as a spiritual commitment, as trust (as one might trust a friend without seeking to test his/her words), or as disposition. So in Wittgenstein's image, for example, a belief is like a picture (say, a picture of the Last Judgement) which the believer has constantly in their mind, regulating his life, 'constantly admonishing me' (Wittgenstein 1966: 55). Belief can also be seen as associated with feeling and affection (Needham 1972: 94), a perspective that brings to the surface some of the psychological complexity and variety of belief. So, for example, 'belief in God' can be seen as encompassing a whole range of emotions 'from reverential love to rebellious rejection': 'not only trust but also awe, dread, dismay, resentment, and perhaps even hatred' (Malcolm 1964: 107). And in yet another long-standing strand of thought, belief has been seen as background knowledge. So, for example, for Hume, 'belief is an act of the mind arising from custom'—custom being everything which 'proceeds from a past repetition, without any new reasoning or conclusion', such as tradition and authority (cited by Needham 1972: 72; cf. Wiebe 1979: 237).

This last approach to belief presents similarities with some more recent, cognitively grounded definitions: for example, with a common distinction between, on the one hand, intuitive or database belief, and, on the other, reflective beliefs (cf. Tremlin 2006: 177 for variant terminology). Database beliefs, in the definition of Dan Sperber, are 'intuitive' in the sense that, in order to hold them as beliefs, we need not reflect—or even be capable of reflecting—on the way we arrived at them or the specific justification we may have for holding them' (1997: 68). Reflective beliefs, on the other hand, are derived by conscious reasoning, by teaching from parents, and so on, and are variable and heterogeneous.

Such cognitively based definitions of belief are, of course, conceived as rooted in the physical operations of the brain. Another crucial difference, however, from earlier approaches is that these different forms of belief are seen as operating in parallel to one another. Strikingly also, the focus is on plural beliefs rather than belief. Reflective beliefs, according to Sperber again, are 'interpretations of representations embedded in the validating context of an intuitive belief' (1996: 89). By contrast, it seems, within the ritual-belief debate in the study of Greek religion, belief is almost always seen as singular: belief is something which you either do or do not have.

A further step then, beyond accepting as uncontroversial the presence in Greek religion of a 'low-intensity' belief, is to open up the overall domain of belief and to look in at the hugely varied propositional statements that constitute it—and to explore particular beliefs or propositions both in their literary or other contexts and in relation to one another. When presented with a given statement, we should ask, in the words of an earlier theorist of belief, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, not 'what does it mean, inherently, statically, absolutely; but rather: What has it meant? What has been its meaning in this or that century; in this or that part of the world; to this or that community?' (Smith 1977: 17). We might examine, for example, the performative context for any particular statement, or the range of possible meanings available for any particular terms used (cf. Skinner 2002: 57–89).

The picture that emerges, then, is a dynamic one, in which certain beliefs might be said only to be activated in particular circumstances (cf. Eidinow 2011: 9). The belief, for example, in the possibility of divine retribution as an explanation of misfortune may lie dormant, as it were, until the right circumstances align: until a notoriously sacrilegious

individual, for example, suffers a misfortune so extreme, or so well matched to his or her crime, as to be instinctively credited to the divine (Harrison 2000: ch. 3). Such a belief might indeed be said only to be generated as a 'spontaneous inference' in that particular context (Sperber 1997: 69), developed on the basis of a 'lexicon' or network of other intuitive beliefs. To pursue the example of divine retribution, behind the conclusion that x person has been the victim of divine retribution, there may lie any of the following, more or less unexamined, beliefs: about the definition of 'sacrilege' (or the semantic field of terms for impiety or injustice), about the appropriateness of certain acts of human vengeance, about the likely forms of retribution, the appropriate speed of retribution, the characters or domains of individual gods, the behaviour appropriate to men or women, and much more.

A number of other complexities of belief might be explored. How, first, can we begin to infer beliefs? How are beliefs expressed? And how does the manner of their expression—a first-person assertion, an ascription to others, or a fleeting disclosure of a presupposition—affect the nature of that evidence?

In the Greek context, in particular, beliefs are commonly expressed in narrative form (cf. Kindt 2006: 43–4). The story of the fulfilment of an oracle or of an instance of divine retribution ends with all the evidence tied up, apparently conclusively. In another sense, however, such stories remain open-ended, with the lurking moral—the implied proposition—that the same may happen again: that the gods have the power to punish wrongdoers, for example (e.g. Hdt. 9.120), or that an oracle is blind to the wealth and status of those that consult it (most famously, the story of Croesus). These kinds of stories have, perhaps, an underestimated role in the transmission, reinforcement, and transformation of belief. The way in which such narrative beliefs tidy up their own narrative trails may also mislead us, however, into a too neat a view of the explanatory role of Greek religion (cf. Gould 1985). As readers, we cannot but see things from the vantage point of the story's end, the point at which the opaque prophecy becomes clear, or the sudden misfortune explicable in terms of an earlier action that had prompted it. If, on the other hand, you try to reconstruct the vision of a character beset on all sides by potential omens (the situation of Xenophon in the *Anabasis*, for example) or of the individual casting around for explanations of a pattern of misfortune, we

see arguably a different picture: of boundless potentiality (cf. Naerebout 1997: 396 n. 946).

Another related complexity is the possibility of a kind of slippage in religious contexts between seemingly literal and figurative usages, the way in which a given proposition may shift from being, to not being, 'in quotes'. In the terminology of Sperber again, any encyclopaedic statement can be rendered a symbolic statement if put in quotes (Sperber 1996: 110). So, for example, an individual might shift from the statement 'p is true' to the statement ' "p is the word of god" is true', or the Christian might hesitate between a literal and a figurative interpretation of the Eucharist.

There are, perhaps, two related dangers here. The first is that such religious propositions are seen as characteristically distinct from others—in so far, for example, as they are incapable of disproof (cf. Wittgenstein 1966: 53–4). Such statements, however ('semi-propositional representational beliefs' in Sperber's terminology), are by no means restricted to religious contexts. Indeed, 'there are many areas where, if we do not speak figuratively, we can say very little' (Soskice 1985: 96).

The second risk is that such statements are envisaged as *merely* figurative or symbolic (and so as empty of value for the historian), that we draw too sharp a distinction between literal and metaphorical meaning (cf. Soskice 1985: 68–70), and so focus on the fact of metaphorical or symbolic language being deployed rather than examining the meaning that it conveys. The statement, for example, that 'Jesus is the lamb of God' is clearly not meant literally, but 'this is not to say that the phrase is intended by Christians as only an evocative way of describing an ordinary man' (Soskice 1985: 89). The slippage, detected by Sperber, between the literal and the figurative is indeed one means by which such propositions can be lived by.

These complexities of religious belief and others—the ways, for example, in which beliefs can be maintained despite contradictory evidence, are reinforced through their expression in action (including ritual), or are transmitted—are all deserving of more intense focus in the context of Greek religion. Before that can take place, however, we need, arguably, to emancipate ourselves further from the long legacy of the study of Greek religion, with its false choice of ritual and belief, and to accept the sphere of religious 'belief' as a more significant aspect in the study of Greek religious experience.

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CHAPTER 3

OLD VS. NEW

EMILY KEARNS

INTRODUCTION

RELIGIONS are systems that both evolve and look to the past. Like any other, the religion of the Greeks—from the earliest times known to us until the triumph of Christianity—exhibits continuity and change. The latter hardly needs comment, but the former is present too. Even in the transition from the Mycenaean period to the 'Dark Ages', once viewed as a more or less absolute cultural fault line, we are becoming aware of increasing numbers of sanctuaries which show cult continuity (Niemeier n.p.), while many trends once viewed as typically Hellenistic can now be seen to have roots in the Classical period (cf. Mikalson 1998). The history of such developments is the history of Greek religion; what I am more concerned with in this brief chapter is to tease out the structural significance of 'old' and 'new' within the system, and to analyse the practitioners' reactions, perceptions, and conscious thought on old and new in religious matters.

TRADITION AND INNOVATION: GODS, RITUAL, THOUGHT

Greek religion may be viewed as an essentially traditional system, and when Greeks talked about religious matters they tended to equate the old with the esteemed. Nevertheless, as Parker (1995: 152–3) neatly puts it, ‘ “Traditional” polytheisms are subject to constant change; that is one of their traditions.’ There is always room for new gods, new identifications of old gods, and new associations between gods, and alongside these we can also often detect changes in cult practice and patterns of religious thought.

Innovation (or preservation) may thus be discerned in three main areas of the Greek religious system. Firstly (and most conspicuously in the scholarly literature, e.g. Garland 1992; Parker 1995: 152–98), we can identify new gods. As discussed in more detail by Ralph Anderson (this volume, Chapter 21), we can see many examples of the adoption of new objects of worship from the fifth century onwards; they may be deities already worshipped in other parts of the Greek world, like Pan and perhaps Boreas in Athens, or they may be the gods of other peoples (Adonis, Sabazios, and later Isis, Osiris, Men . . .), and they may be accepted as part of public state-funded cult (like Bendis in Athens), or remain as objects of private worship (Adonis). To avoid the suggestion that their promoter might wish to demote the traditional gods of the city—as the prosecution alleged of Sokrates (Diog. Laert. 2.40)—one might emphasize the antiquity of the new deity’s worship elsewhere, and (if a foreign god) lay stress on an identification with a Greek equivalent (in terms of name and typical ritual). Alternatively, the new god might be known solely by a Hellenized form of the original name, and perhaps worshipped with ritual of a somewhat ‘exotic’ flavour. Both foreignness and novelty could be played up or played down.

To the Greeks, how you worshipped mattered as much as whom. There were countless rules, some local, some almost universal, laying down what type of sacrifice might be given to individual gods and heroes. The old ways were tried and tested, and the fact that they were supposed to be pleasing to the gods had often an emotional, as well as a practical, appeal.

Porphyry (*Abst*. 2.18) gives an anecdote (possibly of late origin) in which Aischylos refuses to write a paean on the grounds that an older paean by Tynnichos of Chalkis would always be preferred, just as more ancient, simpler statues are thought to be more divine. However, there might still be inducements to change, particularly financially motivated ones. The author of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, attributed to Aristotle, discusses appropriate arguments for retaining sacrifices just as they are, and for making them either more or less magnificent and therefore costly (1423a–4a). Greater magnificence should be represented as an increase of the established order, likely to please both gods and humans, rather than an alteration, he argues, and lesser expenditure as demonstrating pleasing piety. Changing the style of worship completely is clearly not an option.

A third area of possible change is the least tangible, that of religious thought and mentalities. This whole phenomenon covers much ground of fundamental importance to the religious historian, but at the same time is relatively little discussed by the Greeks themselves. Ancient perceptions of changes in religious outlook tend not to go beyond the view that later ages exhibit a decline in piety (for instance, Pl. *Leg*. 984b–e, and compare Isoc. *Areop*. 29–30, below, p. 33). At the same time, relatively new explanations of cult and myth may be retrojected onto an earlier period and represented as wisdom expressed by the ancients in allegorical form. This kind of strategy is seen, for example, in the text known as the Derveni Papyrus (from the fourth or late fifth century BCE), explicating the cosmological meanings of an earlier Orphic theogony, and is parodied by Euripides in *Bacchae* 272–97.

MYTH: CHANGE AND CONFLICT

In mythical terms, the Greeks were very clear that change had taken place in matters concerning the gods. The theogonic traditions exemplified in Hesiod and the Orphic poets narrated the violent overthrow of gods older than Zeus and the Olympians, making no reference to mortals. But the idea that such conflicts could be played out in a human-oriented arena was also familiar: the eponymous chorus of Aischylos' *Eumenides* fight for their

rights against the ‘younger gods’ through their claim to be acting justly in persecuting Orestes. More significantly still, the same play records the view that, before Apollo came to Delphi, the place had belonged in succession to three older, female deities: Earth, Themis, and the Titan Phoibe. Most scholars no longer believe this represents historical fact, but for the Greeks themselves it entails the view that deities other than Apollo were once the main recipients of Delphic cult. The form of worship practised there in historical times had once been new.

The *Homeric Hymns* similarly narrate moments when cults were established. Apollo comes to Delphi (in a version different from that given by Aischylos) and Demeter comes to Eleusis, each deity giving instruction concerning their worship. The priesthood is established (Cretan sailors in *Apollo*, the lords of Eleusis and—by implication—the family of Keleos in *Demeter*), and a link with the present is suggested. Similar aetiological links occur in those less elaborate, non-hymnic traditions which speak more briefly of the foundation of a divine cult by a hero or heroine, usually under direct instruction from the deity, with the human founder as first priest of the cult. Their significance for us is twofold. On the one hand, they provide a template for innovation, the pattern cult foundations were perceived to follow; on the other, they give a strong legitimation to tradition, by indicating that the most familiar cults go back effectively unchanged to primordial times and the direct instruction of the deity concerned.

CULT: INTRODUCTIONS AND ARRIVALS

We today, from our ‘etic’ perspective outside the Greek religious system, are accustomed to speak of ‘introducing a cult’. The Greeks too talked about ‘establishing’ sanctuaries, altars, and statues. But, in addition, they said that the god arrived in a place—in other words, the motive force in the action was not so much the human agents as the deity itself. Examples are particularly easy to find in the cult of Asklepios. The inscription recording the inauguration of his worship in Athens, in 421/0, makes the point clear (*IG* II^2 4960). The god ‘comes up’ to the city from the coast,

and ‘arrives’; it is Asklepios himself who decides to come to Attica; his human host accepts his arrival and does everything possible to facilitate it. It is the same, according to the Epidaurian miracle inscriptions, when the ‘accidental’ arrival of a sanctuary snake at Halieis announces the god’s will to settle there (*IG* IV^2, 1 122.69–82, no. 33; LiDonnici 1995: 111, B13); and analogous too is the well-known case of Pan, who sent a message to the Athenians through the runner Philippides to ask why they did not worship him (Hdt 6.105). A human individual who ‘introduces new gods’ may well be viewed with suspicion, but when it is the god himself who demands to be worshipped, there is a presumption of authenticity. Non-compliance would be foolish; multiple stories told of opposition to the arrival of Dionysos (Pentheus, Lykourgos, the inhabitants of Attica), all ultimately fruitless.

Of course, the Greeks recognized a distinction between such ancient times and their own day, and between mythological and more practical, everyday forms of discourse, so the mythological model does not map one-to-one onto the contemporary situation. Mythology dramatizes and simplifies; in the real world, the communication lines between gods and humans are uncertain. Therefore, confirmation for new cult institutions was often sought and received from an oracle. Oracular pronouncements were a very frequent incentive to religious action (and hence, often, change) for both cities and individuals; the question ‘Praying and sacrificing to which god will give us a better outcome?’ is a favourite, and a good proportion of the preserved responses from Delphi and Dodona, (real and imagined) is concerned with the regulation of religious affairs. In theory at least, oracles were understood to supply the divine command for a new cult, which, in the mythological paradigm, comes directly from the god instituting his own worship.

ORIGINS: ‘ANCESTRAL’ AND ‘ADDITIONAL’

Whereas the new tends to demand justification, the prestige of the old might seem to speak for itself. But in fact, while some rituals might be universally recognized as 'old', there could be differing views on the status of other rites, along with differing accounts of their origins. Foundation myths lacked the status of universally recognized revelation; something else was needed. In Athens, a more prosaic backup was provided, at least from the late fifth century, by the attempt to classify sacrifices as 'ancestral' (*patria*—that is, supposedly to be found in the laws of Solon) and 'additional' (*epitheta*—having come into use since that time). But one of our main sources for this distinction also suggests the possible difficulty in agreeing the correct category for particular sacrifices. Lysias 30 is a speech for the prosecution of Nikomachos, who, in the last decade of the fifth century BCE, undertook probably two codifications of state sacrifices, as part of an overall clarification of the law. Nikomachos' brief was evidently to bring together into one list the 'Solonian' sacrifices and those which had been added by decree at a later date; parts of what is almost certainly the resulting calendar survive (*LSS* 10). The speaker in Lysias claims that by accepting too many of the *epitheta* into his list—with ulterior motives darkly hinted at—Nikomachos has increased the expenditure on sacrifice beyond what the polis will bear, with the result that some of the *patria* have gone unsacrificed. No corroborating details are given, and we do not know whether the prosecution was successful (see Todd 1996). The important thing, from our point of view, is the clear distinction between the two types of sacrifice, and the differing worth attributed to them: while any sacrifice decreed 'by the people' ought to be carried out, where this is not possible precedence should be given to the *patria*.

The case can hardly be separated from its complex political context, but the point made by Lysias is closely echoed much later in the fourth century BCE in Isokrates' *Areopagitikos* (29–30). Speaking of the Athenians of old, he says 'They did not create a procession of three hundred oxen when they felt like it and randomly omit the ancestral (*patrioi*) sacrifices, nor did they celebrate the additional (*epithetoi*) festivals on a magnificent scale when a feast was involved but make sacrifices from the lowest tender in the holiest of rituals.' The equation of new with ostentatious and capricious, and old with simple and pious, has a moral force at least partly independent of any immediate context, and both

underpins and goes further than the categorization of the old as compulsory and the new as optional. (See also D'Angour 2011: 90–8.) Of course, other points of view were possible; but in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (984–5) it is the Worse Argument that takes the *bouphonia* ritual of the Athenian Diipolieia as a byword for something absurdly old-fashioned. It is very significant that the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (above, p. 30) recommends the representation of change as amplification, rather than substitution—just as implied by the word *epitheta* for the post-Solonian sacrifices in Athens.

PROMPTS AND PROVOCATIONS

What circumstances stimulated the introduction of the new in religion? Was innovation as arbitrary a process as Isokrates seems to imply? Here, it is much easier to trace new cults than changes in cult style, and modern historians will naturally take a different viewpoint from the orator. Some cases would necessarily have gained the approval of the most traditional observers; for instance, the founding of new sanctuaries when new cities were founded. A city without sanctuaries was obviously unthinkable, and such foundations normally mimicked closely and deliberately their originals in the mother city, retaining contact and continuity by means of a physical object from it (Malkin 1991). Somewhat similar regional patterns can be observed, for example, in Attica, where, probably in the late sixth century, the important regional sanctuaries of Eleusis and Brauron produced related establishments in the town area (Parker 1995: 73); here, old and new sanctuaries were necessarily linked more closely, and integrated together in polis-wide celebrations.

More radically, new foundations often came about in connection with some sort of crisis. It was the events surrounding the Persian Wars that apparently stimulated the cults of Boreas, Pan, Artemis Agrotera, and Artemis Aristoboule (among others) in Athens (see, in this volume, Anderson, Chapter 21). In a sense, all of these new cults and celebrations could be classed as thank-offerings in response to deliverance from danger, but on a much larger scale than normal. Herodotos' account enlists

a great number of gods and heroes in the struggle against the Persians, and it was probably not only in Athens that, the crisis surmounted, new cults were brought into prominence and new aspects were given to old. It remains very likely that oracular consultation preceded the formal adoption of state cult in most cases. By contrast, the remarkable diffusion of the cult of Asklepios in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, rather than being born from response to a particular crisis, is better seen as part of a growing trend, essentially independent of more specific circumstances (see Wickkiser 2008: 97–105, 2009). The momentum of growth itself had a legitimating effect, and an Athenian audience of 422 (Ar. *Vesp*. 121–3) was already expected to understand the concept of a trip to an Asklepieion for healing purposes, before the establishment of the Athenian Asklepieia. Mythology probably helped Asklepios' integration into the cult pantheon; his sons are mentioned in the *Iliad*, though there is no sign of his divinity there, and it cannot have harmed his career that he was the son of Apollo, the oracular god par excellence.

Thus far, our discussion, though drawing on specific illustrative examples, has proceeded mainly along general lines. Perhaps inevitably, it has tended to focus on innovation and response, matters which yield valuable explicit statements on the roles and perceived worth of old and new in religion, but this is only half the story; we must also consider the numerous possibilities for their interplay in practice. Much will be discerned in the chapters that follow, but as an introductory case study we may consider the mysteries celebrated near the ancient city of Andania in Messenia.

ANDANIAN MYSTERIES

When, in 370/69 BCE, a Messenian state was founded in what had been Spartan territory, west of Taygetos, it was necessary to create proper civic cults, presumably on the basis of whatever religious practices the various groups of enslaved, disfranchised, and diaspora Messenians had managed to carry out during Spartan rule. But the developed legend of the mysteries, as given by the second-century CE writer Pausanias, was that the

ritual had been brought to Messenia in what we would call mythical times, by Kaukon of Eleusis, and later reinforced or reformed by (the equally mythical) Lykos and Methapos. Later, in the second Messenian War, when the national hero Aristomenes realized that defeat and subjugation by the Spartans was inevitable, he hid ‘something held in secret’ (*en aporrhetoi*) among the Messenians, burying it on Mount Ithome and praying the gods to keep it safe, for if it were destroyed or fell into Spartan hands Messenia would perish forever. After the Spartan defeat at Leuktra, the Argive general Epiteles received the instruction from a dream figure, identified as Kaukon, to dig in a certain place on Mt Ithome and ‘rescue the old woman’. There he found a bronze jar (*hydria*), which he took to the Theban general Epaminondas, who had himself been told by a similar dream figure to restore their land to the Messenians. Opening the jar, they found ‘the ritual’ (*telete*) written on thin sheets of tin, which members of Messenian priestly families transcribed into books (4.1.5–9, 2.6, 20.3–4, 26.6–8, 27.5).

The narrative’s historicity is questionable, to say the least, but while Aristomenes is essentially a legendary figure, there is nothing implausible in the idea that the mysteries date back to roughly the time of their ‘rediscovery’ in the fourth century, though hard evidence is lacking (Luraghi 2008: 236–7). In shaping cults for the new polis at the time of its foundation, it would be highly desirable to link them with the period before the Spartan conquest. A new construction is built using older materials (elements from the religion of helots, *perioikoi*, or the diaspora), but also claiming a very much older origin: firstly, a beginning in mythical times, if the attribution to Kaukon is not a later addition, and, secondly, a crucial link for the new, independent Messenian polity with the moment just preceding its former extinction. Here, the new is essentially a recovery of the old; the unique history of Messenia allows and even encourages a particularly dramatic juxtaposition of the two.

Even if their real origin is later than the fourth century, the point still stands for the received history of the ritual in the Imperial period, the narrative as given in Pausanias. The mysteries are represented as both new, at the birth of the modern Messenian polis, and very old. The dream imagery of the narrative emphasizes this, with the command to ‘rescue the old woman’ who was enclosed in a bronze chamber, near to death. This has some links with an earlier dream, experienced by a Messenian exile, who

dreamed that he was having sex with his dead mother, who afterwards came to life. In accordance with a common principle of dream interpretation, ‘mother’ is taken to mean ‘ancestral land’ (cf. Hdt. 6.107; Artemid. 1.79): the land is reunited with her children, and revives. The symbolic language in both cases indicates deliverance and new life for something old, and the coincidence of motifs reinforces the equation of the mysteries with Messenian identity that their talismanic status in the Aristomenes story suggests.

The validity of the new cult is established in part through a dream vision, a direct communication with the divine in the shape of the heroized Kaukon, the first hierophant, and no oracular confirmation is attested. The ancient object found through a dream is unusual in antiquity (though commonly reported in the Greece of more recent times: Stewart 2004, 2012), but is apparently an irrefutable witness to the antiquity of the ritual. Writings are sometimes found in mystery rituals, but are by no means mandatory, perhaps not even usual (there is no indication that books were in use at Eleusis). Here, they are a palpable link between old and new. The jar in which they were found could be viewed in the sanctuary in Pausanias’ time, making it clear that the story of the mysteries’ recovery was an important part of the way they were perceived. In this regard, it is perhaps significant that Pausanias treats the text as coterminous with the ritual, speaking of ‘the *telete*’ as the object concealed in the jar—as indeed may also be implied by its personification as an old woman in Epiteles’ dream. The emphasis on a physical object as guarantor of continuity recalls the role of the ritual elements in the establishment of a new city (Deshours 2006: 196–8), but, in this ‘refoundation’, the new city is separated from the old by time rather than in space.

Two documents give further evidence of change and development in the Andanian mysteries. An inscription found in the Argive sanctuary of Pythian Apollo (*Syll.*^{3} 735) is the record of an oracular response given to ‘Mnasistratos the hierophant, consulting about the sacrifice and the mysteries’. The reply is incomplete, but certainly draws a distinction between the two terms: ‘Sacrificing with good omens to the Great Karneian Gods in accordance with ancestral custom. And I also tell the Mes[seni]a[n]s to celebrate the myste[ries. . .].’ As usual, the oracle is, in part, conservative, recommending the importance of ancestral rituals, but the second clause, on the mysteries, probably contained more specific

instructions, relating, for instance, to date, place, or periodicity. It is clear that the original question cannot have been ‘Is it better for the Messenians to celebrate the sacrifice in accordance with ancestral custom?’, since such a question would always be answered in the affirmative. So the clarification requested must relate to some proposed modification, or at the very least, uncertainty (for a different interpretation, see Pirenne-Delforge 2010).

The date of the inscription is unclear, though no earlier than the second century BCE. Equal uncertainty surrounds the long and detailed document from Messenia itself (*IG* V, 1 1390; on dating, Gawlinski 2011: 3–11), setting out regulations for the proper conduct of the mysteries, and also mentioning a Mnasistratos. The most economical hypothesis is that the two Mnasistratoi are the same, and that the regulations of the Messenian inscription were produced in consequence of the oracular response. However, even if this is not so, this second inscription still represents a blend of old and new. The secret parts of the ritual cannot be alluded to in a public text, but we can assume that they remain unchanged. The bulk of the regulations is concerned with the smooth running of the ritual and the maintenance of proper order among the participants. It seems likely that the ‘sacred men’, who appear repeatedly in the inscription, take over a good deal of such competence from Mnasistratos the hierophant (and benefactor) and perhaps the priests and priestesses of the deities of the mysteries. Mnasistratos has given certain books, probably the (supposed) copies of the original metal-leaf ritual text, into the keeping of these *hieroi*, but this need not imply any diminution of his hierophantic role, the essentials of which are likely, at this date, to have been transmitted orally and visually rather than through a written text. This long set of regulations seems to be primarily innovative in the administrative aspects of the cult, and, secondarily perhaps, in details of procession and sacrifice—the sort of thing which the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* tackles in its treatment of ‘changing sacrifices’. By contrast, the importance given to the books, placed emphatically as the first matter to concern the *hieroi* after their swearing-in, is suggestive of the link with the past and the unchanging nature of the heart of the ritual.

CONCLUSION

Despite scholarly disagreement over the exact purpose of these two inscriptions, one thing is clear: the articulation and development of the Andanian cult—and, in this, it is likely to be typical of most cult complexes—shows not merely a mélange of old and new, but a pattern in which old and new have a tendency to acquire and represent certain significances, both in isolation and in relation to each other. 'Old' may or may not be old in a historical sense, but its antiquity is emphasized, not only guaranteeing the venerability of the ritual's heart, but articulating key moments in the community's (self-perceived) past; this is an increasingly common function of cult in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, with many of the observances listed by Pausanias, for instance, capable of bearing that writer's faintly political interpretation in looking back to their city's glory days (cf. Swain 1996: 330–56). 'New' is very often implicitly represented as *re*newing the ancient, re-establishing the direct contact with the divine which was held to be the cult's origin, possibly forming part of a series of such re-established contacts, and providing a platform from which individuals could benefit, and be seen to benefit, the community, and partially recapitulate the role of the hero founder. The example we have looked at is far from exhausting the possibilities, but will give some sense of the dynamic interaction between perceptions of old and new in Greek religious practice and understanding.

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CHAPTER 4

MANY VS. ONE

VINCIANE PIRENNE-DELFORGE AND GABRIELLA PIRONTI

INTRODUCTION

THE term ‘polytheism’ has come down to us from the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who used the Greek adjective *polutheos* and its cognates to describe a widespread vision of the divine that was different from that of his own religion (Ph. *Dec*. 65: *polutheos*; *Mutat*. 205: *polutheia*). (The majority of Mediterranean cultures considered that many divinities existed in the world and needed to be honoured by humans.) In the context of its emergence, the Greek word was pejorative, in the same way that ‘paganism’ and ‘idolatry’ would soon be used in Latin Christianity. ‘Polytheism’ began to be used during the sixteenth century, to draw a contrast between truthful monotheism and the error of pagan religions (Schmidt 1987). Its context, for two centuries at least, would remain largely determined by Christian theology.

Since the nineteenth century, Greek rituals and their social embedding have been extensively studied. In contrast, gods were left on the fringes of new scholarly trends as past curiosities to be treated individually in

dictionaries (god of war, goddess of love, of wisdom, etc.), just like a collection of statues in a museum. Today, the use of the term ‘polytheism’ as an explanatory category is a clear indicator that gods are returning to the forefront of the study of ancient Greek religion (recently, Bremmer and Erskine 2010; Parker 2011: 64–102; Versnel 2011). Scholars are focusing on the ways in which Greek people performed rituals, not only to affirm social hierarchies in their local communities (the horizontal ‘embedded’ perspective), but also explicitly *to honour their gods* (the vertical perspective).

How Does Polytheism Work?

Understanding plurality is hard work, and describing how polytheism functions has been a matter of scholarly debate for fifty years at least. The shift of paradigm concerning these questions is closely connected with studies devoted to the Greek pantheon by Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne (Vernant 1974; and Detienne and Vernant 1974, revisited by Detienne 1997), and often called the ‘French structuralist approach’. Scholars working on Greek polytheism today must still take this work into account. We can synthesize it as follows, also taking into consideration some more recent qualifications.

Vernant (1965, 1974) was reacting against two trends in scholarship, first, a long-lasting ‘essentialization’ of the Greek gods, in which individual gods were characterized as ‘gods of’ a particular domain (as mentioned), and, second, an obsessive quest for the origin of the gods. He underlined the fact that Greek gods were divine powers and not persons, despite their literary and iconographical representations as anthropomorphic figures (already, for Gernet, as early as 1931, a god was a ‘system of notions’ (1931: 222)). Vernant emphasized the necessity of taking into consideration the connections between deities within a pantheon: divine powers were to be defined in contrast to other powers and limited by them. We can no longer fully subscribe to this model. One of its main limits is the fact that seeing the gods in opposition to each other runs the risk of underestimating the overlap in their fields of competence.

Moreover, a rigid application of the model can still lead to identifying each god with a distinctive and exclusive ‘mode of intervention’ (Dumézil 1974: 186–256). Indeed, it gives back to the gods an ‘essentializing’ unity that was the original point of contention (Detienne 1997: 61–2; cf. Parker 2005: 390). Nevertheless, the core of Vernant’s approach remains valid, when qualified by a more complex analysis of how polytheism works.

In this perspective, a god can be seen as a complex network or cluster of powers. On the one hand, each god is defined by his or her own powers, competences, attributes, and so on—its own network; on the other hand, it is characterized by relationships and associations with other gods belonging to the same pantheon—a ‘system’ whose components cannot be studied in isolation—for instance, in a city, with various sanctuaries and cults, or in a literary work, with its interacting divine protagonists. Unity and plurality are closely related at each level of analysis: each god is conceived as many powers in a network whose core is the god’s name; many gods form structures that we call pantheons; each pantheon is seen as an organizational whole within its context (the whole cosmos in a theogony; the Trojan War in epics; a scenario on the tragic stage at Athens; natural, social, and political life in a city, etc.).

Studies on polytheism challenge the ‘canonical’ vision of Greek gods as distinct personalities with a clear psychological profile, established once and for all in the mythological tradition. In past decades, scholars still needed to insist that Greek deities were approached in ritual practice and conceived at different levels—the local, polis level, and the Panhellenic one, in sanctuaries as in narratives (Sourvinou-Inwood 1978). This assertion is obvious today, and the risk of ‘essentialization’ has been reduced enough to partially rehabilitate the word ‘personality’ or the expression ‘cult persona’ to refer to the gods. In a religious context, evoking a ‘personality’ is the way to get a handle on the gods, to pray to them, but what is finally expected by worshippers is well and truly a manifestation of divine power. In the middle of this tension, the name of the god is essential, providing an evocation of the particular god in question, which pervades myth and cult, personality and powers.

The tension between these components—single ‘personalities’ and interrelated powers within a pantheon—remains at the core of many discussions on how polytheism works and implies that there are different methodological options by which to address this question. The regional

scope for studying a consistent pantheon, on the one hand, and the deity-centred option, on the other, are the mainstreams of the study of Greek polytheism today. Both of them can be questioned and have their limitations. In a god-by-god analysis, one encounters the risk of being excessively focused on the chosen deity, drawing a static and unequivocal picture, and forgetting the relationships created by specific configurations (see *BMCR* 2011.01.14). However, the regional option creates its own distortions. It conveniently marks out connections within a local system, but does not necessarily explain why we find, in so many places, a deity named Athena, or Zeus, or Demeter, Apollo, and so on, often with specific cult epithets. Accordingly, one runs the risk of resorting to a superficial and 'canonical' description of these deities, by describing them at a Panhellenic level, without adequate acknowledgment of their local persona. In other words, a study focused only on a region encounters two different risks: either, on the one hand, 'atomizing' a single deity in its local manifestations; or, on the other hand, reducing deities to their generic description ('god of . . .', 'goddess of . . .'), which is rather paradoxical in studies trying to understand polytheism at a local level. Another way of addressing the question of how polytheism works would be to study a particular domain of life (marriage, protection of children, war, politics, agriculture, seafaring, etc.) and observe how different divinities are involved in this context. An ideal position would be to integrate all of these approaches, but such an enterprise remains difficult to conduct, except in a large collaborative team.

It has been stated that 'polytheism is indescribable' (Parker 2005: 387). However, we cannot remain silent. We must try to understand how the Greeks managed to conceptualize unity and diversity *together* (*contra* Versnel 2011). Gods cannot be conceived in static terms because cults and myths reconfigure and redefine them as personalities and, at the same time, as powers interrelated to each other. Under the same name, a deity is at once the cult persona worshipped in a particular place and the figure that is, for example, described in the *Iliad* as feasting on Mount Olympos or staged by Euripides in the theatre of Dionysos at Athens. The divine name has a central value because the god is not completely absorbed in and reduced to what is particular and temporary in its function or narrative construction (Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 10–12). A god is still more than the heterogeneous mosaic resulting from an arbitrary combination of epithets,

images, and narratives (*contra* Burkert 1985: 119, 218). To use once again the metaphor of the network, a sum would be static, while a network is dynamic, fluid, flexible. A god can be conceptualized like such a network: different activities or contexts, such as the telling of myths or practice of particular cults, let some segments and portions of the network appear (Pironti 2007: 285). The whole set of connections is not necessarily entirely activated in each context, whatever that may be, but remains potentially available. For instance, in a local cult, the god's name with a cult epithet is one aspect of the deity seen in close-up, not the expression of a completely different deity. In this respect, myths and rituals are not unrelated bodies of evidence, but specific languages, which resonate inside the mental frame of poets who narrated tales, of painters who decorated Attic vases, and of worshippers who performed rituals.

To give some flesh to these abstractions, let us take into account two different types of divinity. The first to be tackled are what scholarship misleadingly identifies as 'minor deities' or 'personifications', that is, the Moirai (Pirenne-Delforge and Pironti 2010). The second example refers to a deity belonging to the 'highest level' of the Greek pantheon: Hera, the wife of Zeus himself. The methodological approach of polytheism must be the same for both categories because both refer to divinities felt by worshippers to be powerful agents acting in their lives at one time or another.

CASE STUDY 1: THE MOIRAI

The name of the Moirai refers to the 'portion' or 'share' that every human —or divine—being receives. In this case, the powers of the goddesses are closely related to the notion conveyed by their name, just like their mother Themis ('the divinely inspired order of things') and many other 'divine personifications' worshipped by the Greeks. They are commonly understood to be 'goddesses of fate' and actually appear in mythic tales that mainly associate them with birth and death. As traditional spinners and weavers, these goddesses rule over everyone's lifecycle and over the various patterns of the 'life thread'. This is the traditional, Panhellenic

image conveyed by tales from Homer to Pausanias and beyond. The label ‘goddesses of fate’ is not completely wrong, but is unsatisfactory, as are all such reductive kinds of labels concerning the gods. Moreover, it is built upon the unwarranted assumption of a universal notion of ‘fate’, common to the Greek world and our own (as Eidinow 2011 notes). We can identify the Moirai as powers whose specific network encompasses distribution, reward, and regulation. On a mythical level, they interact with the stability warranted by Zeus’ authority (Hes. *Theog*. 901–6; cf. Pironti 2009). On the level of cult practices, the evidence related to them is neither numerous nor explicit about worshippers’ expectations. This evidence includes three kinds of texts (we do not take into account funerary inscriptions, which use a very loose notion of ‘fate’): first, individual or familial dedications concerning pregnancy and birth (*IG* II² 4547; *FD* III 1.560; cf. Pind. *Ol*. 6.41–4; Ant. Lib. 29); second, family foundations of the Hellenistic period constructing a kind of ‘micro-pantheon’ in which the Moirai are honoured (*IG* XII, 4 348; *LSAM* 72); third, civic rituals attested by literary texts and inscriptions (*IG* I³ 7.12; Paus. 2.11.4).

Without addressing the detail of this evidence, we can delineate the position assumed by these goddesses in the fields of birth and family matters. Their interventions in human lives and communities are various but they are closely related to both lifespan and lifecycle, in narratives as well as in cult practice. Other deities are concerned with the same fields of intervention, but the ‘set of notions’ related to the Moirai, including distribution, reward, regulation, is specific. They are the benevolent protectors of the lifecycle, as well as the strict guardians of its limits. The Moirai regulate the share attributed to everyone, determining the beginning and the end of life, as well as the important steps that regulate life, with an eye on the correct balance between good and evil. On a larger scale, a family group honours the Moirai in order to perpetuate the family. In this case, the expected intervention not only concerns individual lives and their limits, but the consolidation of the lineage itself. Finally, on the global level of polis religion, epigraphic and literary evidence indicates that a whole civic community could pay homage to the Moirai. What exactly were the expectations of a city? In the *Eumenides* of Aischylos, where the Moirai and the Semnai theai are closely connected, we are told that the life of young people is protected by both groups of goddesses since they are able to prevent civil war (Aesch. *Eum.* 956–67; cf. Paus.

2.11.4, on a cult relating the two at Sicyon). Accordingly, the balance between good and evil at the very heart of the polis concerns a correct distribution of births and deaths within the community. The strict regulation made by the Moirai is one of the conditions of the survival of the entire community of the polis, as well as of the families composing it. The three spinners and weavers depicted in Panhellenic myths are not a fiction without any relation to cults. Moreover, their close relationship to Zeus and the identity of their mother, Themis, are the best indications that they are not, as has been hypothesized, primeval goddesses of death and arbitrary dispensators of good and evil. Instead, they are regulators, even though human beings are often unable to grasp the cosmic dimension of this regulation and distribution, and complain about the arbitrariness of fate and the limits inherent in human life.

CASE STUDY 2: HERA

Hera is our second case study (Pirenne-Delforge and Pironti 2009, and forthcoming) and our focus will be her relationship with Zeus, which is fundamental in various tales concerning the goddess. Across the whole Greek tradition, she is the wife of the father and king of the gods. In Homer, she is depicted, at least at first sight, as a shrew, always getting angry at Zeus (Hom. *Il*. 1.517–21; 8.407–8). The same image appears in those tales where she persecutes the illegitimate children of her fickle husband (Hom. *Il*. 15.24–30; Hes. *Theog*. 313–35; Ap. Rhod. 1.996–7). Taken at face value, mythical narratives give the goddess an image that is incompatible with her cult persona, for example, in Argos or in Samos. However, if we carefully read the many tales or many vases depicting Hera, and scrutinize the aetiologies of some of her cults, important insights emerge, giving us some clues that can be used to test the validity of a ‘Hera network’. In this case, marriage, legitimacy, power, and sovereignty are essential aspects for determining at least a part of a definitional structure of the goddess, which is largely rooted in the relationship between Hera and her husband and brother, the king of the gods.

Regarding the cult persona of Hera in Argos, the aetiological evidence is scanty. Nevertheless, we can reconstruct a mythic cycle in which the main focus is the relationship of the goddess with Zeus: she is a *parthenos*, 'unmarried girl, maiden', then, gets married, leaves her husband, becomes a *parthenos* again, and the cycle starts again (Paus. 2.38.2–3; cf. 8.22.2–3). The concrete implementation of the cycle into local cult practice is not completely clear, but Zeus is undeniably present in the Argive plain, as attested by local iconography. In the fifth century BCE, a new temple and statue were established there for the goddess. One of the pediments depicted the birth of Zeus and the Gigantomachy, the other showed the Trojan War (Paus. 2.17.3). A huge chryselephantine statue was commissioned from one Polykleitos, and showed Hera seated on a throne, wearing a crown decorated with the Graces and Seasons. In one hand, according to Pausanias (2.17.4), the goddess carried a pomegranate, and, in the other, a sceptre with a cuckoo. Pausanias explained the presence of the bird on the sceptre in terms of the passion felt by Zeus for Hera in her maidenhood: to seduce her, he changed himself into a cuckoo and she caught it to be her pet. The bird, then, may be seen as a reference to one part of the cycle just described.

The bird's appearance on the sceptre is not mere chance. The latter is an iconographical symbol for sovereignty; the bird perched on it manifests the matrimonial dimension of Hera's sovereign power. The birth of Zeus on the pediment of her temple is another indication of this dimension, and it is also alluded to elsewhere; for example, on the huge Classical temple to Hera Teleia in Boiotian Plataia. One of the temple's statues, carved by Praxiteles and placed at the entrance of the edifice, represents the goddess Rhea carrying to Kronos the stone wrapped in swaddling clothes, as though it were the baby Zeus to which she had given birth; the other one, made by the same sculptor, is Hera Teleia, 'the Spouse' herself. A further image of Hera from the same site, whose sculptor remains unknown, was called the 'Bride' (Paus. 9.2.7). The ritual cycle in which Hera becomes again and again the wife of Zeus is very clear in this case: every year in Plataia, the Daidala festival staged the reconciliation, after a separation, of the deities in a matrimonial context (Paus. 9.3.1–9.3.9). In Argos, as well as in Plataia, the theogonic references present in the goddess's sanctuary are indications of the strong connections, on the one hand, between Hera

and Zeus as children of Kronos, and, on the other hand, between the matrimonial relationship and divine sovereignty.

A last element can be provided to support the view that Hera at Argos is closely related to Zeus on both the mythical and ritual levels. Two months of the calendar of Argos refer to marriage. The first is named Gamos, 'Marriage', and echoes the Athenian month Gamelion, 'of the Marriages', sacred to Hera. The second, Telos, 'Achievement', which is another way to express 'Marriage', is known in Argos and Epidauros, but nowhere else. Scholars who have studied this calendar agree that Telos must refer to the cult epithet Teleios-Teleia, supporting the hypothesis that the local goddess is ritually conceived of as the wife of Zeus (*REG* 112, 2009, 215).

At Samos, Hera was honoured from the early Archaic period at least, in an extra-urban sanctuary as impressive as that at Argos (Kyrieleis 1993). The main difference between the two places is the extent of cult attendance: regional at Argos, Aegean, or even largely East Mediterranean, at Samos (see further, in this volume, Constantakopolou, Chapter 19). Some scholars consider that the Hera of Samos is a completely different deity from the Hera of Argos, on the grounds that identity is defined by place and that the local level constructs a cult persona without relation to the Panhellenic level (Versnel 2011: 115, 143). However, returning to the network imagery above, although the ties and nodes forming a 'deity network' may expand or contract, there is still a core, signified in particular by the name of the divinity. We can illustrate this by a comparison between the mythical and ritual cycle for Hera at Argos and the evidence concerning the cult persona of Hera at Samos.

Hera is said to be born at Samos and her *parthenia*, 'virginal time', is closely connected with the local river Imbrasos, also called Parthenos. A fragment of Varro preserved by Lactantius (*Div. inst*. 1.17, 8) mentions a range of interesting elements: the island itself was called Parthenia, because Hera grew up there and married Zeus; her temple was very ancient and the goddess was represented as a bride; some of the rituals in her honour were celebrated as a wedding anniversary. Hera, viewed as a *parthenos* and then a bride, refers to the first two steps of the cycle mentioned at the beginning of this section. In Varro's fragment, the theme of Hera's separation from Zeus is missing, that is the third part of the cycle, which in turn leads to a new cycle, as we perceived in the ritual 'turnover' at Argos and elsewhere. Nevertheless, we can find some trace

of the ritual separation between Hera and her husband in the aetiology and performance of the main festival of Samos, called alternatively Tonaia or Heraia, in which the temple statue was carried to the shore and purified (Avagianou 1991: 46–73).

The aetiology of this festival (given by the Hellenistic author Menodotos of Samos, *FGrH* 541 F 1, quoted by Athenaeus 15.672a–4b) describes the kidnapping of the temple statue by pirates, an attempt that was foiled, apparently by the goddess herself. When the Karians found the image abandoned by the pirates, they wrapped it in a breastplate of willow. It was then liberated by the temple priestess, purified, and set in place once more. If these events were commemorated in the Tonaia festival, then this may provide the missing 'separation' stage. Moreover, the mention in both accounts of willow, a plant associated with virginity, may be significant: according to Varro, Hera was born near the tree, where her *parthenia* is locally rooted; in the story by Menodotos, the use of willow to wrap the image seems to return her to her previous status of *parthenos*. In the Argive plain too, Hera was supposed to recover her *parthenia* every year—in the water of a local spring (Paus. 2.38.2–3). We can argue, then, that when the Samian priestess releases the statue from the willow, purifies it, perhaps during a bridal bath, and restores it on its base, it returns as the bride described by Varro. The matrimonial context, and then the deep relationship of the local sovereign goddess with Zeus, are confirmed by some verses of the Hellenistic poet Nikainetos of Samos (quoted by Athenaeus 15.673b) mentioning a Samian festival with beds installed under the willow 'by Hera'. The epigram closes on the verses: 'We will joyfully sing the glorious young bride of Zeus, the queen of our island.'

In Argos and in Samos, Hera is not independent from Zeus, and the Hera of Argos is not as different from the Samian goddess as is sometimes supposed. One of the main ties of the 'Hera network' binds the goddess to her husband, even where he seems to be absent. On a ritual as well as an imaginative level, marriage, legitimacy, power, and sovereignty are constitutive elements of Hera's figure. Accordingly, her spasmodic anger in myths not only constructs the figure of a shrew overburdening her husband with jealousy: above all, this is her way of caring about the legitimacy of his children and, in the end, of ensuring the safeguard of his royal and cosmic power. As a daughter of Kronos as well as wife of Zeus,

she is deeply concerned by sovereignty. This concern, which constitutes a fundamental element of the Hera network, might partly explain the fact that, as early as the Archaic period, the goddess played such a prominent role at Argos and Samos, as well as in some extra-urban sanctuaries of the Western Greek world.

CONCLUSION

Polytheism encompasses relationships between divine powers, as Vernant wrote many years ago. The whole system can be seen as a complex structure, each element of which (a deity with its proper name) is both itself a complex set of prerogatives, and at the same time, must be considered in concert with the other elements. The two case studies presented here have focused on the first aspect, what we have called the 'deity network'. However, the Moirai are closely connected with other deities such as, for example, Zeus, Eileithyia, or Aphrodite, and these mythical and ritual interactions emphasize, each time, one or another aspects of the 'Moirai network'. And, as we saw concerning Hera, her own network of powers cannot be easily reconstructed without any reference to Zeus, even in cult places where he seems, at first sight, to be absent. As these case studies demonstrate, if we are to understand and describe ancient Greek polytheism, and its multifarious potentialities, the unity and plurality of the gods must be conceptualized together at every level.

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PART II

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

CHAPTER 5

VISUAL EVIDENCE

MILETTE GAIFMAN

A brief glance at the scholarship of Greek religion shows that ancient images are often cited as evidence in studies of cult practices, sacred spaces, mythology, and perceptions of the divine. When we skim through some of the most prominent and influential publications (e.g. Nilsson 1967; Burkert 1985) it appears that visual representations from Greek and Greco-Roman antiquity in a variety of media, whether painted on vases, carved in two-dimensional reliefs, sculpted in three-dimensional statuary, or minted on coins have something to tell us about the religious life of the ancient Greeks (see also, in this volume, Scheer, Chapter 12). Indeed, images emerge as indispensable in certain areas of examination. For example, our understanding of animal sacrifice and mythology would have been far more limited without the rich plethora of visual sources (e.g. Gantz 1993; Van Straten 1995). It may not be difficult to acknowledge the usefulness of ancient images in this field of enquiry, yet like any other primary source, their use as evidence demands some close scrutiny; what can ancient images reveal about Greek religion?

I will consider some methodological problems raised by this question by focusing on three examples of different kinds of visual evidence: a painted vase, a carved marble relief, and a coin. These three objects, which differ in their material, size, and mode of production, as well as their date,

original context, patronage, function, and use, offer different perspectives on the question at hand. Let me start with the depiction of Herakles at a burning altar on an Attic black figure oil flask, or *lekythos*, from *c*.500 BCE, that is on display today in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure 5.1). The figure of the hero dressed in a lion-skin, armed with quiver and bow, and identified by an inscription can inform studies on many facets of Greek religion, ranging from ritual practices, via myths, to ancient conceptions of the cosmos. Among these aspects, the depiction of meat on two spits and the curling object atop the burning altar invites consideration of the vase in a study of animal sacrifice specifically (as, for example, in Van Straten 1995: 136; Gebauer 2002: 364). The portrayal of a built ceremonial altar with volutes that recalls Archaic and Classical Greek altars uncovered in archaeological excavations (Yavis 1949: 95–105) suggests that the image is somehow linked to ancient *realia*. One may therefore presume that other elements in the scene are also related to the actualities of the past and can give us a glimpse into the inaccessible experiences of Greek animal sacrifice. In this case, the depicted spits and the object atop the flaming altar may be suggestive of ancient practices. They offer ideas about the grilling of meat and the placement of animal parts on the burning fire, and can help a modern reconstruction of the sacrificial process. Furthermore, the examination of the vase together with other sources suggests that the depicted long spits and the curling object on the sacrificial platform could be identified as visual references to *splanchna*, namely the burning of the entrails, and the victim's tail that was offered to the god (Van Straten 1995: 128–41).

FIGURE 5.1 Herakles at a burning altar. Black figure Attic *lekythos*, attributed to the Sappho Painter, *c*.500 BCE. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 41.162.29. Rogers Fund, 1941. www.metmuseum.org.

For scholars seeking to conjure up the realities of Greek animal sacrifice (see, in this volume, Naiden, Chapter 31), the image on the New

York *lekythos* and similar depictions may prove invaluable, particularly because textual sources provide only a partial idea about the practical aspects of the ritual. However, one must proceed with caution, for images offer limited information. The *lekythos* in New York suggests that spits were used in the course of Greek animal sacrifice, yet it does not yield any information about the details of the procedure, such as who placed the meat on the spits, which body parts were grilled in this way, and who performed the minutiae of the ritual. Furthermore, unlike other similar scenes, on the *lekythos* there is no portrayal of wood placed atop the burning altar. There is no attempt to indicate who put on the fire and how. We may tell that a sacrifice is taking place, but the image's objective is not to instruct the modern viewer about the actual steps of the sacrifice. In fact, the *lekythos* does not purport to be a reflection of reality; Herakles is not a historic figure, he is a mythological hero. He is alone at the altar, whereas animal sacrifice required the participation of more than one person. Close consideration of the vase shows that the painted *lekythos* contains only a selection of elements related to *realia*.

The burning tail on the altar offers a case in point for the complex relationship between depiction and what we may tell about ancient reality from other sources. While textual sources and archaeological remains indicate that, in actuality, the god's portion could include a variety of body parts from the sacrificial victims, such as the tail and the thighbones, the New York *lekythos* and similar sacrificial scenes feature only a curling tail atop the burning altar. In this corpus, the tail emerges as the chosen visual reference to the god's portion in the sacrifice. The reasons for this particular choice may vary. They may be the result of some pictorial tradition among a group of pot-painters. They may be guided by the tail's distinctive form, which renders it easily recognizable as the god's portion, probably more than other anatomical parts of the victim. They may also be related to the possible meaning the burning tail might have had in antiquity; according to a scholiast to Aristophanes *Peace* 1053, the tail's reaction to the fire was taken as a sign for the sacrifice's success. If this is the case, then the choice of the tail may be a way of asserting that the offering is propitious (Van Straten 1995: 122, 190–1). The example of the curling tail atop an altar demonstrates that the choice to depict a particular feature which bears some resemblance to an element from reality is not guided by a simple wish to reproduce that element. Rather, the

incorporation of certain elements in an image results from a complex combination of demands and constraints of pictorial representation and its production that is often difficult to unpack.

There are additional limitations to deploying images for the reconstruction of religious practice; certain aspects of ancient ritual practice cannot be detected in the visual record. For instance, the actual killing of the animal in the course of the sacrifice is hardly ever shown in ancient images, and the consumption of meat is completely absent (see most recent discussion in Naiden 2013: 23). The case of animal sacrifice is not unique. Other practices of Greek religion that are known from textual sources are not shown in Greek imagery. For example, the making of libations in the course of the Greek symposium is well attested in ancient sources, yet no depiction of the actual pouring of liquids in a sympotic context is known (Lissarrague 1995). Such discrepancies in our evidence show once again that images do not offer full reflections of reality, and caution us against uncritical deployment of imagery for the purpose of historical reconstruction. One must keep in mind that, like textual sources, images are governed by the particularities of their genre, authorship, mode of production, and audiences.

The presence of Herakles on the New York *lekythos* invites us to consider the painted pot with regard to the study of Greek myth, specifically the complex mythology of the great hero. The vase's distinctive imagery implies a reference to a specific myth. The single scene that encompasses the entire *lekythos* includes not only Herakles and a crouching dog beneath him, but also three other figures identified by inscriptions. On the side of the *lekythos* that is opposite Herakles' sacrifice, Helios—the 'Sun'—is shown as a bearded man with a radiating sun disk above his head, whose lower body is cut off by the ground-line (Figure 5.2). He rises above four frontal horses, while holding a goad and the reins of a chariot. On his right is Eos—'Dawn'—depicted as a woman with an orb above her head. She directs with her goad the horses that move upwards to the right, while the female figure of Nyx—'Night'—who also has an orb above her head, commands her horses upwards, to the left. Only the heads of Dawn and Night and the upper bodies of their horses are visible; they emerge above the descending brown trails whose nature is unclear and could be dark clouds or perhaps streams (Mertens 2010: 100).

FIGURE 5.2 Helios and his horses rising, with Dawn on the right and Night on the left. Black figure Attic *lekythos*, attributed to the Sappho Painter, *c*.500 BCE. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 41.162.29. Rogers Fund, 1941. <www.metmuseum.org>.

The labelled protagonists in mid-action, the allusion to a specific location suggested by Herakles' position atop a rocky terrain, and the

reference to a time of day indicated by the rising chariot of the Sun suggest that the vase refers to a specific mythological event. Presumably, the identification of the depicted myth could expand our knowledge of the stories about Herakles in Athens of *c*.500 BCE. However, the attempt to identify the vase's subject through an examination of the vase in conjunction with other images and texts related to Herakles yields varying results. The vase could be interpreted as a portrayal of a moment in the course of Herakles' confrontation with the Sun while on his way to steal the herd of Geryon (*CVA* USA 8: 93–4), or a moment in the course of Herakles' travels to the underworld in order to bring back the three-headed dog, Kerberos (Pinney and Ridgway 1981). The crux of the problem lies in the uniqueness of the image. No other ancient source, whether visual or literary, includes Herakles' sacrifice alongside this particular combination of figures. The consequences of the challenge are witnessed in the entry for Herakles in the standard reference work for the iconography of Classical mythology, the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)*. The *lekythos* is listed under three rubrics, namely non-narrative scenes, the tenth labour of Herakles, and the eleventh labour (*LIMC* s.v. Herakles, nos 1341, 2547, 2623).

The oil flask demonstrates some of the complexities entailed in identifying mythological scenes. The vase suggests a reference to a specific event, yet, due to the image's uniqueness, it is unclear which myth it refers to. Consequently, the entry in the *LIMC* maintains the possibility that the scene could also be regarded as non-narrative. Obviously, not all mythological scenes are like the one of the New York *lekythos*, and many are easily identifiable. Yet often images diverge from other visual or literary representations of the same theme. In the case of our *lekythos*, even if we assume that the vase refers to Herakles' journey to the underworld, it is still unique in its depiction of the hero's sacrifice atop a rocky terrain in the presence of a dog, who *may* be Kerberos, and in conjunction with the rising of the Sun, Dawn, and Night. The New York *lekythos* shows that a mythological episode may be known from imagery, independently of a literary tradition. For the vase may refer to a story that has not survived in any other source, or it may articulate its own variant of a myth concerning Herakles.

The methodological difficulties of identifying the myth in an image arise from a fundamental discrepancy between past and present. In

Classical antiquity, myths were transmitted in a variety of ways—orally, visually, and textually—and images played a prominent role in articulating and propagating them in society (see also the chapters in Part III of this volume). Since, by their very nature, myths are mutable and assume a range of guises in different contexts (Graf 1993: 1–4), there could be visual versions of myths that are unique and/or do not have literary parallels. For these reasons, in some cases, a mythological scene is known only from images and its relation to some literary tradition is unclear. This is the case of the well-known image of Ajax and Achilles playing dice shown on the amphora by Exekias (Vatican Museums, cat. no. 16757), for which there is no clear literary source (Boardman 1978: 19–20). In other instances, a depiction of a single episode, or a group of myths, is attested in the visual record well before its appearance in texts. For example, the twelve labours of Herakles are first witnessed as a group on the metopes of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia in *c*.460 BCE, centuries before the earliest surviving literary compilation of the hero's feats (Gantz 1993: 381–2).

In contrast to the varied ways in which myths were circulated in the ancient Greek world, the modern study of Greek mythology tends to privilege texts because of the narrative nature of myths. Consequently, a pervasive approach to images is to link them with stories known from literary sources. Yet the examination of images in the study of Greek myths need not be limited to the identification and classification of a represented scene, or to their deployment as evidence for the existence of a myth in a particular time and place. For visual representations, by their very nature, operate differently from texts (see, most recently, Osborne 2011), and while images do not tell stories the way texts do, they have much to teach us about other aspects of Greek mythology in antiquity. Perhaps more than any other source, ancient images speak to the spread and embeddedness of Greek mythology in ancient societies, as myths were evoked visually in different ways, whether on simple household items or grand sanctuaries. Looking at our *lekythos*, we may not be able to tell with full certainty which episode in Herakles' travails the vase alludes to, yet it reveals a particular idea about Herakles' persona in Athens of *c*.500 BCE. The great hero, known for his bad temper and lack of self-control, is shown in the midst of a pious act. The vase presents a vision of Herakles as a solitary calm man, engaging in one of the major rituals of Greek religion.

The vase's images of moving luminaries solicit an examination of the New York *lekythos* in the context of a study of Greek cosmology. The chariots of the Sun and Dawn (Figure 5.2) recall the Homeric poems' descriptions of Sun and Dawn rising from Okeanos at daybreak (Hom. *Il*. 7.421–3), and the movement of Dawn and Night in opposite directions brings to mind Hesiod's account of the underworld and the place where Night and Day cross and greet each other (see Hes. *Theog*. 746–54, with Pinney and Ridgway 1981: 142). Furthermore, the New York *lekythos* features one of the earliest surviving renditions of the progression of the celestial bodies (Lacroix 1974: 101–6) and the Sun, Night, and Dawn in human form (see *LIMC* s.v. Astra no. 3, s.v. Eos no. 1). These depictions speak to an interest in the advancement of time among makers and consumers of humble clay objects in Athenian society at the turn from the sixth to the fifth century BCE.

Thus far, I have considered the vase as ancillary to different areas of research of Greek religion. The image on this pot, however, was not conceived as a document for modern historians, museum displays, and book illustrations. Like any other ancient image, it demands to be examined in its own right, as integral to the oil flask on which it is rendered and in relation to its original context. Such holistic examination offers new insights to the historian who is interested in religious ideas that were articulated in images. Taking this approach, we may note that the positioning of the paintings on the pot's cylindrical surface presents Herakles' sacrifice as contemporaneous with the advancing luminaries. The hero's quiet ritual, performed apart from society, parallels the movements of the Sun, Dawn, and Night. This juxtaposition that links the two events may be interpreted as two powerful visual comments: a new day dawns when Herakles makes his unique offering at the altar; or, when the day rises, Herakles makes a unique offering.

The vase's find-spot in an Attic tomb indicates that, like most oil flasks of its kind, it was made and used as a grave good (e.g. Houby-Nielsen 1995; Oakley 2004: 9–11). While the pot's final site of deposition could suggest that the vase portrays a moment during Herakles' journey to the underworld, the archaeological context does more than support a possible identification of the depicted event: it highlights a specific aspect of the hero's personality. Like the *lekythos* that served to connect the living and the beloved who passed away, Herakles is a figure that bridges the gaps

between those who are alive and the dead. The hero, who was eventually deified, also embodies a link between mortals and immortals. The trait of connecting the perceptible world and spheres beyond human sight is also witnessed in other elements of the vase's imagery: Herakles' sacrifice, using spits upon an altar, resembles actuality and, at the same time, is unattainable to mortals because of its isolation, mode of execution, and grand scale. In their motion and appearance, Dawn, Sun, and Night shuttle between the seen and comprehensible parts of the cosmos and those that are invisible and incomprehensible; they have anthropomorphic features and are recognizable thanks to their labels, while their bodies are incomplete and they rise from enigmatic trails of unknown nature. The funerary gift and its imagery open a window onto some of the ways in which the connections between the realm of living mortals and the spheres beyond humans' reach were articulated in Athens of *c*.500 BCE, in ritual practices, mythological thought, and conceptions of the cosmos.

In antiquity, the Attic oil flask was hidden from the public eye. In contrast, the marble relief from New Phaleron in Piraeus was in plain view (Figure 5.3). The carefully carved image was placed atop an inscribed stele, indicating that it is a dedication (for an early account, see Svoronos 1908: 493–506). This find, alongside an inscribed list of gods that was found in its vicinity, received ample scholarly attention from historians of Greek religion (e.g. Larson 2001: 131–4), epigraphists (e.g. Guarducci 1974), and Classical archaeologists and historians of art (e.g. Güntner 1994: 78–80). Much of the discussion revolved around the texts associated with the relief. Let us, however, begin by putting some art historical tools to the test and explore the evidentiary value of an ancient image by considering the relief independently of other ancient documents.

FIGURE 5.3 Relief of Xenokrateia. Marble, 50 × 65 cm, *c*.410 BCE. Athens National Archaeological Museum, 2756. © Vanni Archive/Art Rescource, NY.

First, this case highlights the usefulness of stylistic analysis for the historian (Neer 2010: 6–11). Here, elements of style, such as facial features, postures, and drapery resemble works of the latter half of the fifth century BCE, such as the Parthenon Frieze, and the Nike Balustrade. Together with the relief's find-spot, and the Pentelic marble from which it was made, they suggest that it was produced in Attica in the very end of the fifth century BCE (e.g. Ridgway 1981: 131–3). Iconographic examination is another tool for examination. In this example, it allows for the identification of two deities. The unique seat on the far left gives clues about the youthful figure occupying it. Composed of a bowl supported by tall legs, it has a decorative griffin attached to its edge serving as armrest, while two coiled snakes form the handles and back. The so-called tripod-throne (e.g. Linfert 1967: 151 n. 3) indicates that the seated youth is Apollo. The reference to Delphi made by the *omphalos* and eagle beneath the deity's right foot gives greater specificity to Apollo's identity; it presents him as Pythian Apollo. A second deity is recognizable on the far right. The bull with a man's head conforms to the iconography of the river god Acheloos (*LIMC* s.v. Acheloos: 24 no. 197, 30).

Iconography is helpful, yet it is also limited. On this relief, for instance, apart from Apollo and Acheloos, the figures are insufficiently distinguished to allow their identification with full certainty on the basis of their appearance and attributes alone. However, visual analysis can do more than help ascribe names to figures; it can shed light on numerous aspects of an image. For instance, the female figure standing behind Acheloos exemplifies how, in Classical Greek art, stylistic and iconographic features differentiate between living beings and visual representations. The figure is wearing a tall form of headgear known as a *polos* and a sleeveless tunic, while her hair, coming down to her shoulders, recalls hairstyles of the Archaic period. The archaizing features, dress, and hieratic demeanour resemble those of statues of goddesses depicted in *c*.400 BCE (e.g. de Cesare 1997: figs. 67, 68), and indicate that on the far right is a female statue, possibly of a goddess.

Visual cues, such as height, dress, gesture, and attitude also help distinguish between groups. For example, in the foreground a female figure raises her hands in veneration towards a much taller male figure, who bends downwards in her direction, while placing his right foot on a rectangular block. The boy in the front stretches his arm and grasps the larger figure's cloak. In this case, the female figure's gesture, the different behaviours, and relative sizes indicate that these are a woman and child approaching a god. This observation also implies that all the other standing figures are also likely to be divinities, since they are all of similar height to Apollo and the god in the foreground. Most of the deities are difficult to name, yet certain connections among them are notable. For example, Apollo's proximity to the goddess next to him suggests that she is somehow affiliated with him, whereas the veils worn by three of the goddesses on the right point to an affinity among them.

The observations made thus far help us gain a better grasp of the moment portrayed in the relief, although they do not tell us under what circumstances it was made, or who commissioned it. Consequently, for the historian interested only in facts, an approach grounded in visual analysis alone may be of limited use. The scholar of religious thought, however, could find this line of enquiry of great value. For example, the relief from New Phaleron offers invaluable evidence about women and children in Attic religion of *c*.400 BCE. Unattended by a mature man or any other companion, the female venerator and the boy come into close proximity to

the god, and their awe is met with the deity's attentiveness; she looks the god in the face, as the boy touches his clothes. While it is impossible to ascertain the historic truthfulness of the depicted event, the relief speaks to a subjective perception of precious intimacy between these worshippers and a god. The presence of numerous divinities underscores the uniqueness of the moment; although so many gods and goddesses are nearby, and Apollo's toes gently touch the woman's clothes, the two mortals interact with only one deity. While most of the divinities do not acknowledge the unfolding event—they either turn to each other, or are consumed in their own thoughts—Acheloos from afar and Apollo from behind see the event. The god of Greece's longest river and the Pythian divinity witness the epiphany experienced by the woman and the boy. The relief provides irrefutable proof that at least the commissioner of this marble object envisioned such a remarkable religious experience.

Other ideas current in Classical Attica can be discerned. Apollo's unique seat speaks to a particular perception of the tripod and the god. The coiling snakes bring to mind Apollo's triumph over the monstrous Python (Ogden 2013: 40–8, and, e.g., *LIMC* s.v. Apollo no. 998) and the snake column of the golden tripod dedicated in Delphi after the victory over the Persians in 479 BCE (Hdt. 9.81; Thuc. 1.132), while the griffin recalls attachments on cauldrons of the seventh century BCE. Along with the *omphalos* supporting the god's feet, these decorative elements transform the tripod—originally a cooking implement—into an age-old grand throne of the oracular deity of Delphi that elevates its occupier to a supreme position (Papalexandrou 2005: esp. 9, 185, 189–90). The presence of Acheloos on the other edge of the relief reinforces Apollo's primacy. The two divinities framing the relief share the association with a geographic location, yet the bovine deity appears as though he were a worshipper approaching the Pythian divinity. The relief offers a specific vision of the god of Delphi; he is the enthroned sovereign, who, while resting his feet upon the navel of the earth, oversees the unfolding event and the entire scene.

Thus far, I have not taken into account the inscriptions associated with the relief. I have pursued this approach in order to demonstrate how close analysis of an image can bring to light ancient ideas pertinent to the history of religion: ideas that were articulated visually. The relief demands further examination along this line of enquiry of other components such as

the female statue behind Acheloos and the goddesses on the right. Let us, however, now turn to the texts. The dedication that was inscribed on its supporting stele names Xenokrateia, mother and daughter from the deme of Cholleidai, as dedicator of the gift to 'Kephisos and his altar-sharing gods' for the sake of and/or in gratitude for teaching (*IG* I^3 987/*IG* II^2 4548). The text sheds additional light on the image; the woman and child of the relief can be linked with Xenokrateia and her son, and the inscription's primary dedicatee, Kephisos, is likely the god that greets them. Seen in its entirety, the votive monument emerges as an illuminating document for the historian interested in the religious experience of individuals. Both image and text reveal an investment in personal devotion. They speak to, on the one hand, an intimate encounter between two individuals and a god in the presence of other divinities, and, on the other hand, Xenokrateia's dedicatory act and her thankfulness and hope for the growth of education.

The second inscription associated with the relief was found in the same area and includes a list of gods in the dative case (*IG* II^2 4547). The presence of Pythian Apollo and Acheloos in this text suggests that, although it was carved on a separate stone, it is somehow related to the relief; both Xenokrateia's gift and this inscription may have been part of the same sacred precinct. In addition to another votive relief that was also uncovered in New Phaleron (Athens, National Archaeological Museum, no. 1783), Xenokrateia's gift sheds light on the history of private devotion and sanctuaries founded by individuals in this part of Attica in the late Classical period (Vikela 1997: 222–4). This case exemplifies how, alongside other materials, carved reliefs and images in general are invaluable for the historian who seeks to reconstruct a particular landscape of religious sites.

The relief of New Phaleron demonstrates that, like any image accompanied by a text, inscribed votive reliefs demand a holistic approach that takes all of their components into account (Gaifman 2008). However, one should beware of privileging one element over another. For historians of religion who are primarily trained in reading texts, the natural tendency is to prefer the textual to the visual. Consequently, the image may become ancillary, and its examination guided by available writings and focused on the identification and classification of depicted figures while other visual components are completely ignored. This line of enquiry has resulted in a

decades-long debate around the identification of the figures on Xenokrateia's votive, with no resolution in sight (for different identifications, see Beschi 2002: 34), as well as discussions that do not mention the presence of Apollo and Acheloos (e.g. Van Straten 1981: 90).

Alternatively, one could consider image and available texts side by side. In the case of Xenokrateia's votive, for example, the comparison of the image and the texts highlights notable differences. On the relief, Pythian Apollo and Acheloos stand out among all other figures; they frame the relief, and are the only gods who are clearly recognizable, even without additional attributes that may have been originally painted on the surface. In contrast, these two gods are not mentioned in the dedication, while on the list that was found nearby they are neither first nor last—Apollo is third and Acheloos is seventh among the ten gods and groups of divinities mentioned. Furthermore, while the identity of the dedicator, or the occasion for which the relief was made, cannot be learned from the image alone, the dedicatory inscription does not record any vision of the god, nor does the list articulate Apollo's superior position. These discrepancies suggest that image and text operated together: that one was not ancillary to the other, but rather that they complemented each other.

The approach proposed here highlights aspects of the relief from New Phaleron in addition to other traits that have already been recognized; Xenokrateia's gift has furnished an example for an image related to divination (*ThesCRA* s.v. Divination gr.: 23 no. 148), a representation of Greek veneration (*ThesCRA* s.v. Veneration gr.: 184 no. 10), and a depiction of a site of worship (*ThesCRA* s.v. Representations of Cult Places gr.: 400 no. 113). Additionally, the votive has been recognized as a useful relic from a cult site in New Phaleron and a striking piece of evidence for the religious life and patron divinities of women and children (e.g. Dillon 2002: 24–5; Parker 2005: 429–30; Lawton 2007: 46–50). However, when considering image and text as complementary elements of Xenokrateia's gift, its profound devotional statement comes to light; the relief asserts that this woman's dedicatory act was conceived as inseparable from an epiphany that was envisioned as occurring under the watching eye of the Pythian Apollo somewhere between the Delphic *omphalos* and the river Acheloos. We have no way of telling whether indeed Xenokrateia experienced such an epiphany and whether her son truly touched the garments of the god. Yet, unknowingly, she bequeathed to the modern

historian a gift that reveals the way she sought to visualize her relationship with the divine.

The two examples I have considered thus far are among the group of ancient images produced for and on behalf of individuals and families. Such depictions may have resonances with communal ideologies yet they were neither made on behalf of a city-state, an ethnic group, and/or governing authority, nor do they purport to be representative of such entities. Obviously, private individuals were not the only ones to patronize religious imagery. We may apply a similar approach that considers the religious ideas and the role of images within religious experience in relation to commissions on behalf of sovereigns and/or public groups in the public sphere. Coins, for instance, were minted by city-states, kings, and emperors, and often feature religious imagery. What can numismatic evidence tell the historian of religion? From the outset, one must recognize that the commonality of religious subjects on ancient coins need not undermine their fundamental significance. Minted depictions of divinities, heroes, sacred sites, ritual implements, and objects associated with the holy speak to the pertinence of religion, beyond its own practice and theory. In antiquity, time and time again money was linked with the divine, myth, and worship. The sacred was embedded in everyday economic exchanges and articulated social and political identities and relationships.

Take, for example, a coin that was minted in Samos under the Roman emperor Domitian (Head and Poole 1892: 372). Like similar coins in its series, the obverse shows a laureate head of the emperor accompanied by an identifying label, and the reverse features a temple, namely a structure with a pediment and four columns that is raised on three steps (Figure 5.4). In the centre of the building stands a columnar female figure with hands extended to the sides, tall headgear, and fillets hanging from her arms. The figure's archaizing features and place within the temple suggest that it is a statue that is worshipped. The shrine is accompanied by the legend ΣΑΜΙΩΝ, of the Samians. Without any additional information, the coin tells us of the adoption of a particular sanctuary as the marker of local identity to be shown on the coin's reverse as the counterpart of the standard imperial portrait that was minted on the obverse of coins throughout the empire. The recurrence of the minted image of the Samian shrine from the reign of Domitian to the reign of Gallienus further

highlights its significance. For centuries, the elite of Samos selected a sanctuary with a distinctive statue as the polis' emblem alongside the regular Roman image of the obverse (see further, Weiss 2005).

FIGURE 5.4 Coin from Samos with image of temple and cult statue from the reign of Domitian 81–96 CE. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

In light of Samos' centuries-long cult of Hera (see in general, Walter 1965), the sanctuary on the coinage has long been identified as the

renowned Samian Heraion (Head and Poole 1892: 372). This well-founded identification invites further consideration of the coin's evidentiary value. For example, does the shrine on the Samian issue reflect the appearance of the religious architecture on the Ionian Island in the first century CE? Are we to imagine Hera's temple set on three steps and with a statue in the centre between four columns? Since, in antiquity, statues that were worshipped in religious practice were not placed at the entrance to the temple, the simple answer to these questions is negative. It is indeed reasonable to hypothesize that the minted image echoes some elements of reality, yet the task of identifying them by considering other sources is far from simple. For instance, Vitruvius describes the Samian Heraion as Doric (Vitr. *De arch.* 7 preface 12), whereas the shrine on the coins is always Ionic, leaving us to wonder whether the Roman architect described the same holy structure as the one shown on the numismatic material. On the Domitianic issue the lintel is flat, whereas in the vast majority of later emissions it is arched (Head and Poole 1892: 372–94), as, for example, on a coin from the reign of Etruscilla (Figure 5.5). We may only wonder about the significance of this variance. Do the coins reflect the appearance of a particular structure? Is the building shown on the Domitianic issues different from the one portrayed on later coins? The suggestion in response to these quandaries that the entire series from Samos features a Roman building's interior, a free-standing small shrine, or perhaps an *aedicula* (Price and Trell 1977: 135), may be compelling yet cannot be confirmed.

FIGURE 5.5 Coin from Samos with image of temple and cult statue from the reign of Etruscilla 249–251 CE. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

The Samian coinage offers a case in point for the profound difficulties of using numismatic imagery for the reconstruction of the actualities of religion and cult sites. We can imagine that some elements from reality may have been preserved in minted imagery, yet coins prove to be particularly challenging as documents for the sake of accurate reconstruction. Furthermore, one must keep in mind that depictions of monuments and objects on coins do not necessarily relate to actual

structures that existed in reality. There are indeed instances where there is no certainty that there ever was a temple at a site that minted a coin with such an image (e.g. Burrell 2004: 310–12).

Numismatic evidence can shed only partial light on ancient actualities, yet the manner in which certain religious subjects are shown can be instructive. For example, throughout the Samian series, the statue in the temple has a distinctive silhouette, tall headgear, and hanging fillets. We cannot tell with certainty what the real ancient statue of Hera actually looked like, or whether the figure on the coin resembles its presumed original (see e.g. O'Brien 1993: 21–38). We can assert, however, that, in contrast to ancient realities in which the image of the goddess in the temple was not easily viewable, on the numismatic picture it is rendered as visible and easily recognizable. From an inaccessible sacred object that perhaps could have only been seen on special occasions, the statue of Hera was turned into an easily accessible emblem seen on coins in everyday transactions.

The Samian coinage demonstrates the power of what may be termed visual rhetoric in Greek antiquity. Hera's ancient statue remains etched in our imagination in the form presented on the minted images of Samos. The choice to depict this particular figure of Hera from among other available portrayals of the goddess is telling. By selecting a non-naturalistic and recognizably Archaic figure, the Samians evoked their own ancient past. In fact, for centuries of Roman dominance, the distinctive statue was minted on coins, not only within a temple, but also on its own, and side by side with divinities and figures (Head and Poole 1892: 371–95). The elite of Samos placed at the heart of its imagery a visibly ancient image of worship and thereby celebrated the great antiquity and continuity of the famous cult of Hera.

The recurring emblem of the ancient statue could also serve to articulate power relations. On most of the coins in which Hera's statue is placed within a temple, it is set within a visibly Roman structure. Apart from Domitianic issues that show a flat roof, most other emissions feature the temple with an arched lintel and columns with spiral fluting—two architectural elements that arise under Rome. The ancient image framed by a visibly Roman building makes a poignant statement; religious Samian traditions from deep antiquity continue to thrive under the roof of Roman rule. The religious image served to articulate relations not only

with the great imperial force, but also with other city-states. The Samian statue is similar to statues depicted on coinage of other Anatolian city-states, such as Artemis of Ephesos (see e.g. Head and Poole 1892: 112). While the argument that this resemblance shows that the different Anatolian images shared a common root is difficult to prove (O'Brien 1993: 21–38), the visual impact of this resemblance is apparent. Similar cultic images on issues of different locations imply some connections between these different poleis; through their choices of religious imagery different city-states affirmed their ties. Overall, close consideration of minted images reveals religion's central role in articulating an intricate nexus of identities.

The coins of Samos were struck centuries after the Athenian *lekythos* was deposited in a tomb, and Xenokrateia's relief set up in New Phaleron. While each of these objects was made under different circumstances, their close examination reveals their visual force. All three belong to cultures in which images asserted and propagated perceptions and ideologies. One may choose to treat images such as these as ancillary to other evidentiary material, and as illustrative of other elements of life in the ancient world. However, such approaches disregard the central role visual representations played in antiquity. The challenge facing the historian of religion is to approach ancient imagery within the context of the sophisticated visual culture to which it belongs. By adopting the art historian's eye, treating each case in its own right, and taking into account the original context and accompanying texts when available, we may overcome some of the difficulties on the way, whether missing archaeological data, or unidentifiable figures. In this way, we may begin to grasp the power of ancient images and explore the complex ideas they articulated regarding all aspects of Greek religion, the divine, ritual practices, myths, cosmology, and places of worship.

Suggested Reading

See Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 3–23 for approaches to material evidence. See Giuliani 2013 for myths in images in Greek art. See Platt 2011: 31–50 on how votive reliefs articulated and shaped religious ideas and experiences. Lacroix 1949 is a learned and immensely rich source on

Greek numismatic material for the study of Greek religion. See also Howgego 2005 for a discussion of coin imagery, specifically in the Roman provinces, particularly 2–7 on religion and myth.

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CHAPTER 6

LITERARY EVIDENCE—PROSE

HANNAH WILLEY

INTRODUCTION

THE first-century BCE Stoic philosopher Poseidonios distinguished three routes by which reverence of the gods had been transmitted to his age: by the philosophers, by the poets, and through the cities' laws. His rough contemporary, the Roman scholar Varro, famously constructed a similar trichotomy in his distinction between *theologia naturalis*, *theologia fabularis*, and *theologia civilis*.

Few scholars today would explicitly endorse the Varronian division (Mikalson 2010: 16f., who distinguishes between the 'gods of philosophers', the 'gods of poets', and the 'gods of cult' is a notable exception. See Feeney 1998 and Sourvinou-Inwood 1997 for criticism of this approach). We may, nonetheless, usefully begin with these classifications, because the deep-seated attitude which underpins them has influenced the development of the modern study of ancient Greek religion in ways which are interesting and pertinent for a discussion of prose sources in particular. Furthermore, it is precisely through critical reactions to this sort of attitude and related perspectives that some of the seminal

recent shifts and developments in scholarly engagements with prose sources were made possible.

To begin, we might ask where, if at all, non-philosophical prose texts fit into this neat division of sources for the religious attitudes and practices of the Greeks. Alongside philosophical works, a wide and heterogeneous array of prose texts from the ancient world survive. To offer a non-exhaustive and overlapping list, historians, geographers, mythographers, travel writers, medical theorists, essayists, orators, (auto) biographers, and satirists all provide us with further prose sources for the study of Greek religion. If these sources are to be accommodated within the tripartite framework at all, is it that they are to be straightforwardly equated with a supposedly isolated *theologia civilis*? If so, can they be construed as unproblematic quarries of information about 'popular' religion and cult, to be mined by historians? And, finally, can we simply isolate philosophical prose sources from others in the way that this approach encourages?

PROSE SOURCES AS RELIGIOUS TEXTS

Tom Harrison (2007) recently made a plea for religious historians to include a wider range of texts in their purview. Texts which are not (unlike e.g. Hesiod's *Theogony*) overtly religious in either their subject matter or (unlike e.g. Athenian tragedy) their performance context too often 'receive attention only rarely and for a limited set of purposes' (Harrison 2007: 375). Prose texts have often proven particularly vulnerable to such narrow treatment. In one extreme but revealing case, Patricia Easterling contrasts 'Greek poetry', glossed as 'our literary sources' for Greek religion, with its inadequate alternatives—epigraphy is mentioned—without making reference to prose sources at all (Easterling 1985: 34). Too frequently, prose sources are not considered as texts which play an active role in the religious life and religious experience of the Greeks (unlike, for example, plays or hymns performed in festival contexts).

Such preconceptions arise in part because of a deep-seated dismissive attitude to the creative ambitions and capabilities of the prosaic. In the second century CE, the orator Aelius Aristides felt the need to offer a

lengthy *apologia* for his *pezos logos*—'pedestrian language'—in a prose hymn composed for Sarapis (see Goldhill 2002: 5). It would be folly to deny the prominence of verse in expressions of significant, involved, and influential Greek reflections on and engagements with their gods (a prominence with which Aristides self-consciously plays here), but nor is it the case that such reflections and engagements were the sole privilege of verse (and 'philosophical' prose) texts. Herodotos (2.53) famously recognized the influence of the poets on Greek conceptions of their gods when he attributed to Homer and Hesiod the making of the theogony of the gods, the allocation of their names, honours, and skill sets, and the illumination of their appearances. But it would be a mistake to react to Herodotos' statement by seeing him as divorcing categorically the creative projects of the poets (who themselves shape a religious world) from the (more detached) exposition of the historian, who may comment upon this world but not actively shape it. For all the various and profound differences between Herodotos and the poets he mentions, and between their respective projects, we will see that we encounter in Herodotos (or, for example, Pausanias or Lykourgos) an involved, distinctive, and creative religious thinker in his own right.

Again, even if prose texts lack the concrete performative religious contexts of tragedies (see, in this volume, Calame, Chapter 13) or cultic hymns (see, in this volume, Versnel, Chapter 30), it would be a mistake to infer that they could not, therefore, engage with, frame, or influence religious experiences. Scholars rightly call for a sensitivity to the unique contextual circumstances of different sorts of verse text, from victory odes to Homeric hymns and civic tragedies, and the inevitable bearing of these circumstances on the reception of these texts by their ancient audiences. But we should perhaps avoid too diametrical a contrast between poetic texts, which are 'not just a text but a text, a song, a dance, a performance, a ritual' and a prose text as 'just a text . . . a simple text' (Fowler 2013: xii, referring to historiography). Even without a concrete performative religious context, prose texts can key into or subtly play with religious contextual frames (such as, for example, dedication or divine inspiration), to engage actively with the religious experience of their audiences. They may even present themselves as religious artefacts. Heraklitos, for example, is said to have dedicated his work in a temple of Artemis. More obliquely, Plato can appropriate the traditionally poetic notion of

inspiration and have his Athenian stranger construct the imagined community of Magnesia by following 'wherever the god leads' (*Leg.* 968B10f with Nightingale 1993: 282f.). We will explore under 'Repositories of Information?' and, again, through our test cases, how recent trends in scholarship have elucidated some especially striking ways in which the texts of authors like Herodotos, Aristides, and Pausanias actively engage with and frame contemporary religious experiences.

REPOSITORIES OF INFORMATION?

Though a text's 'prosaic' nature might discourage us from engaging with it as a creative and distinctive reflection on the gods or an active and involved engagement with religious life in the ways outlined above, this very same quality has often encouraged scholars to mine prose sources for the insights they offer into 'lived' Greek religion. The apparently straightforward nature of prose has a particular way of tempting the reader to acquiesce in the authority of the author's account of reality and lived experience (Goldhill 2002: 43). Mikalson reflects on how Herodotos' approach to religion strikes him as 'less artificial, more direct' (2003: 7), while the apparent transparency of Pausanias' report was, for generations, taken more or less at face value, famously earning his work the title 'Baedeker of the ancient world' (see Elsner 1994: 226ff.; Alcock 1996). Against this sort of tendency, recent decades have seen important calls for the historian of Greek religion to maintain and pursue a hypersensitivity to the context, genre, and agenda of all ancient sources (see e.g. Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 1997). It is notable, however, that it remains a persistent concern for scholars to caution against our deep-seated tendency to slip into the habit of reducing these works to a series of 'isolated mentions of certain ritual practices' or 'a mere list of propositions about the gods or their intervention in human life' (Harrison 2007: 375f.). As we shall see, it is often precisely through self-conscious reactions against a treatment of prose sources as mere repositories of information that the more sophisticated and rewarding enquiries into these sources in recent scholarship in the field are developed.

In addition to engendering the allusion of straightforward cultic information, prose sources have also, in the past, been privileged as more or less transparent repositories of genuine, unconstructed attitudes and beliefs. The performance of law-court speeches before a jury of Athenian citizens, for example, was held to ensure their accuracy as a source for Athenian life, 'a quarry from which to win insights into what the Athenians really thought' (see Martin 2009: 1). Finally, the lure of first-person narratives of religious experiences and emotions is a rare and therefore seductive commodity amongst our sources. When combined with the 'more direct' tone of prose texts it is even more liable to generate, for the reader, a sense of transparency. Aristides' *Sacred Tales* were, for example, once celebrated as providing a unique and unqualified opportunity 'to penetrate to the subconscious level' of their author (Behr 1968: xiii).

The practice of mining texts in this way is, unsurprisingly, full of pitfalls and results in distorting reconstructions. A naïve reading of Pausanias' *Periegesis* would, for example, elicit the false conclusion that the Imperial cult impacted little on the religious landscape of Greece in the second century CE. Again, an uncritical acceptance of the testimony of Herodotos and Strabo yields evidence for sacred prostitution in Aphrodite temples at Babylon and Corinth respectively, yet very few scholars now accept that sacred prostitution existed in either locale (e.g. Budin 2008).

These are especially clear examples, but they illustrate more general methodological issues. We must be sensitive to the historical reliability of our sources as witnesses to cultic practices. The geographic, chronological, or cultural distance which separates authors from the religious practices they describe bears on this question of reliability. Importantly, of course, an 'unreliable' source is not an uninteresting one. The question is rather what we can learn from it. If Herodotos' account of sacred prostitution in Babylon, or Lucian's detailed description of the Temple of the Syrian Goddess at Hierapolis (complete with 1800-foot phalluses which are ascended biannually by a man who remains perched on the tip for seven days), are found wanting in the historicity, or even plausibility, of certain of their claims, they remain interesting for the historian of Greek religion. The way these authors shaped and constructed these narratives teaches us much, not only about their social, political,

cultural, and intellectual environments and agendas, but about their own distinctive religious attitudes as well.

Of course, 'writers are not reporters' (Rutherford 2013: 339). Their accounts may have been influenced and shaped by 'the genre of the work, the literary context, the writer's own world, or his imagination'. On the most rudimentary level, authors operated with their own implicit or explicit principles of what was and was not worthy of inclusion in their work. Information about the gods, ritual practice, and religious attitudes are included or passed over depending on the particular criteria in operation. Thucydides' Greece is populated with fewer sanctuaries and festivals than Herodotos' world, divine intervention is not generally inferred from events, and, while speakers may occasionally engage in religious argumentation, such argumentation and religious institutions play a minimal role in the unfolding of events. Rather than postulating a shift in the role of religion in Greek life from the period of the Persian to the Peloponnesian Wars, we need to consider the distinctive and reflective way in which each author perceived their work and, in general, consider personal preferences as well as generic constraints and pragmatic contexts.

What, finally, of a personal perspective: do prose sources, ostensibly free from the poetic distancing which renders us wary of reading as unadulterated facts the first-person register of Hesiod or Theognis, provide any sort of insight into individuals' religious experiences and emotions? Here, too, there are limitations and difficulties. We cannot straightforwardly equate the narrator's with the author's voice. Literary texts do not provide a direct pathway to beliefs, experiences, and emotions.

Lucian's diverse oeuvre provides a striking illustration of the complex, playful ways in which the narrator's voice can be constructed in prose. Scholars once questioned the authenticity of his *De Dea Syria*. The real, satirical Lucian, it was felt, could not possibly have described the Syrian goddess in such an apparently reverent and serious tone. As Jas Elsner (2001) highlights, the author claims to be an Assyrian with first-hand experience and yet he adopts the Ionian Greek of Herodotos (the archetypal outsider looking in) and a Greek cultural framework through which to view this most holy of Syrian sites. The narrator is thus, within this text, a deliberately difficult persona to place—how he relates to Lucian is a question raised but precisely left unresolved. Lucian, no doubt,

constitutes a very particular, self-conscious example, yet he serves to remind us of a general methodological caveat, applicable also to prose texts before the advent of the Second Sophistic. Of course, literary posturing need not exclude genuine sentiment (Hutton 2005: 307): that Lucian can poke fun at the Syrian goddess and her worshippers does not imply that he cannot sincerely count himself among them.

This is not to deny that some prose sources offer distinctive and interesting insights into the ways in which an individual Greek might articulate and represent his own relation to the gods and the nature of his religious experiences. Robert Parker has charted the close relationship that Xenophon, in his *Anabasis*, presents himself as having with Zeus Basileus (Parker 2004: 151). Again, returning to Aelius Aristides' *Sacred Tales*, we find a striking example of an individual represented as having a *distinctively* strong connection to a particular deity. In recounting his maladies and the close and beneficial relationship with Asklepios they occasioned, Aristides gives us insight into how one might, in this period, express and represent one's religious experiences: we encounter bouts of euphoria, fear, and disorientation. These accounts and representations are, of course, highly constructed (see Petsalis-Diomidis 2010). Aristides, the consummate *pepaideumenos*, appeals to literary, artistic, and cultic paradigms in communicating his personal experiences of the god. So, when Athena appears to him in a dream, she explains her inclination to help him by noting his similarity to Homer's Odysseus and Telemachus. Not only is she *Homer's* Athena she is also Pheidias': she appears 'with her aegis and the beauty and magnitude and the whole form of the Athena of Pheidias in Athens' (2.41 K, trans. Behr, cf. 2.65 K). Might Aristides' *constructed* accounts serve as plausible accounts of genuine experiences? And, more interestingly, might individual, lived religious experiences themselves be framed by these sorts of literary, artistic, and cultic paradigms? A hard-and-fast distinction between literature and 'real life' is, as ever, difficult to maintain.

CRITICAL PROSE SOURCES

I turn finally to the particular interpretative difficulties which so-called ‘critical’ texts pose for the scholar of Greek religion. A distinctive difficulty attaches to their descriptions of the beliefs and practices of others (often unspecified groups or characterized simply as ‘the many’). When Plato has his Athenian stranger describe the ‘many people’ who share a belief (taught to them, we are told, by leaders of *teletai*) that crimes in this life will be punished in Hades and that those who inflict harm on others will suffer the same themselves upon reincarnation (*Leg*. 870d–e), we would do well to ask how accurate a description of a genuinely held belief this is, and how widely it was held. Indeed, there is a danger that in presenting (or indeed constructing) religious attitudes, which are subsequently criticized, such critical thinkers burden these unspecified groups of people with explicit theological commitments which they would never have themselves specified or articulated in such a way. So, when Heraklitos refers to those who ‘pray to images as if they are conversing with houses, not recognizing who gods and heroes are’ (B5), are we to infer a widespread and/or explicit view that there was simply no distinction between god and statue?

In approaching sources which express critical attitudes towards the gods, the stories told about them, or the rituals performed for them, scholars have, in the past, been too ready to generalize. There is a tendency to take criticism of a particular religious practice or attitude as an indication of a hostile attitude to traditional religion as a whole (e.g. Gregory 2013 on Heraklitos). Consequently, other engagements with traditional religious thought or practice found in the same author are read in such a hostile light (see Harrison 2007: 382, 2000: 13f. for criticism of this approach).

The Hippokratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* provides one well known example of a text which develops critical attitudes towards certain aspects of contemporary religious practices but does so in a very complex and nuanced way. The author attacks the ‘magicians, purifiers, beggar-priests and charlatans’, who pretend that, through their piety and mysterious knowledge and through an inscrutable ability to coerce and subject the divine to human will, they can cure their clients of the ‘sacred disease’. At first sight, we might be tempted to see here a secular healer mounting a general campaign against religious conceptions of health and disease. A closer look at the text, however, discloses a more complex

situation. The author's invectives are not directed at such religious conceptions per se but, more specifically, at these 'magical' practices and practitioners. Indeed, the author levels a charge of *impiety* against these individuals. Furthermore, far from writing divinity entirely out of the picture, the author informs us that 'all diseases are divine and all human'. Thus, while he may well diverge from traditional patterns of religious thought in certain ways (such as in the belief that the gods do not send illnesses), the Hippokratic author himself engages in creative religious reflection of his own, and appeals to familiar values of piety and impiety in order to denigrate his opponents. A lingering question remains as to whether or not the author's theological position leaves room for any role for the supernatural, whether through temple healing, prayer, or supplication, say (as opposed to the magician's spells), to make a positive contribution to healing (a view which is found elsewhere in the Hippokratic corpus: *Reg*. IV 87 with van der Eijk 2005: 72f. and Gregory 2013: 69ff. For *On the Sacred Disease*, see also Lloyd 1979: ch.1).

The practice of generalizing from a particular critique or objection to a universal hostility to traditional religious practice and belief bespeaks two problematic underlying assumptions. First, is the notion that such critical thinkers conceived of Greek religion as a coherent unity, which could be straightforwardly challenged or rejected as such. This is a far from obvious assumption (see Parker 1996: 210, 1997: 148). Plato's distaste for tales of warring gods or for the view that divine favour may be bought, for example, sit comfortably alongside his repeated and creative appropriations of the notions of initiation and inspiration. The second, still more questionable, assumption, is that rationality and religiosity must pull in opposite directions—such great 'rational' thinkers, it was maintained, could not possibly have entertained such 'primitive' religious notions. Hugh Bowden, for example, has traced a trend in scholarship on Xenophon to see his religiosity as 'a disappointment . . . treat[ed] at best as a forgivable personal eccentricity, and at worst as a sign of his mediocrity' (Bowden 2004: 229).

TEST CASES

I turn now to three brief test cases from different genres and periods to illustrate some of these challenges and opportunities which prose sources present to the religious historian: the ways in which profitable and illuminating engagements with prose sources can be achieved through a critical sensitivity to the pitfalls which we analysed in the previous sections. This will enable us to illustrate some of the recurrent methodological questions which arise in the use of prose sources.

Oratory

Oratory offers one case in which scholars have demonstrated the importance of maintaining a heightened sensitivity to the relation between the pragmatic and generic context in which an author operates, and that author's distinctive ways of talking and thinking about the gods. Parker seeks to explain why certain ideas about and responses to the gods, which were eminently thinkable for an Athenian living in the Classical period and explored in other contexts (e.g. Greek tragedy), were kept out of the rhetorical corpus (Parker 1997). Strikingly absent, for example, is the 'plaintive and accusatory, or pathetic' (156) tone adopted by several tragic heroes in the face of their gods; in its place we find a staunch 'civic optimism' (159) in which the possibility that the gods might turn on Athens or had done so in the past is never explicitly raised and often resolutely denied (Dem. 1.10 constitutes, as Parker notes, a striking illustration).

Does this discrepancy bespeak a distinction between the gods of the city and the gods of the poets, *theologia civilis* and *theologia fabularis*? Thucydides' description of Athens in the grip of disaster should caution against such a neat, Varronian response: plague is ravaging the population, 'supplication, divination and all such things' have proven futile and are, eventually, abandoned altogether (2.47ff.). The gods are perceived not to be answering the prayers of their worshippers; relations between the city and its gods have broken down completely. Thucydides further alludes to an oracle, remembered at this time, in which Apollo promised the Spartans (Athens' opponents) his support in the war (2.5.4). Thucydides here casts Athens in her own tragic action, in which despair of divine benevolence

and aid is presented as a recognizable and plausible response to disaster in near-contemporary society.

Even within rhetorical speeches, the presumed benevolence of the gods does not extend to individuals, particularly one's political or legal opponents (Parker 1997: 152). Indeed, few of Demosthenes' adversaries escape the accolade 'enemy of the gods' and threats of divine vengeance are commonplace. Even if in oratory, then, you are never free to avow that the gods have abandoned the city in order to scare your fellow citizens into voting in your favour, this does not imply a conception of gods who provide only good things. Nor can we simply put this down to a categorical imperative to flatter the audience since orators are perfectly able to castigate the *demos* for its past failings. Rather, it tells us something about attitudes to divine engagement in the city's life. Despair, as Parker says, is an inappropriate response for one who aspires to leadership of the polis (155ff.). To adopt the victor's (or at least not the victim's) stance is vital, since positive relations with the gods are a precondition for civic and individual success. The distinctive approach of oratory to the question of divine engagement in civic life thus does not highlight a doctrinal theological divide. Rather, it illustrates the significance of generic and contextual constraints on the views expressed and questions explored about the gods at a given point in a given text.

Within the rhetorical corpus, generic and contextual constraints may be further broken down. In the context of the public funerary speeches (as distinct from forensic or political oratory), for instance, where blame for defeat or disaster cannot be placed upon the citizens being honoured, divine opposition is sometimes invoked, albeit usually in 'rather veiled terms' (Parker 1997: 155). So, for example, Lysias (2.58) speculates over who was to blame for disaster in the Hellespont, 'whether the ineptitude of the commander or the intention of the gods'. Demosthenes, in his eulogy for the dead, mentions the disposition of the *daimon*, necessity, and chance as factors which could decide the fate of dutiful men who stood firm (60.19). More accusatory is Isokrates' claim in his *Panathenaicus* that when just men fare worse than unjust this may be explained by the negligence (*ameleian*) of the gods (1.186). Though the anger of Zeus, or Apollo's preference for the other side, are still not explanatory options here, we begin to see that a range of attitudes could, nonetheless, be

expressed, even within the limits set by the generic and socio-political conventions which governed such public speech.

In a recent monograph on the religious argumentation of Demosthenes, Gunther Martin explores this sort of variety within the rhetorical corpus (Martin 2009). He analyses how different authors adopt different approaches, generating distinct and coherent public personas through the nature of their engagement with religious arguments and ideas. He points, for example, to Aeschines' and Isokrates' preference for pollution as an argumentative ploy, and the particular emphasis in Lykourgos on the need for appropriate relations between individual, state, and gods, both to be contrasted with Demosthenes' frequently observable reluctance to engage with religious topics (204ff.). We see, then, the flexibility of Athenian attitudes to the gods and their role in civic affairs, and the need to avoid generalizations from isolated statements found in our prose sources: what a given author hoped would be persuasive and appropriate in a given context should not be inferred to characterize Athenian attitudes as such.

Furthermore, even where a particular kind of religious argumentation is adopted, there remains room for an individual author to approach the trope in a creative manner. For Parker, Lykourgos' attitude to delayed divine punishment ('If the perjured man does not suffer himself, at least his children and all his family are overtaken by dire misfortunes' (1.79, trans. Burtt 1954), constitutes an 'easy moralism', which, he suspects, has its counterpart in 'conventional piety' (1997: 153f.). Not only, however, is this not the only attitude to be expressed on the question of divine punishment (see, for instance, Lys. fr.9.4 *ap*. Athen. 551a–52b, with Harrison 2007: 379), it is also not as unreflective as we might at first assume. The ways in which Lykourgos emphatically implicates the jurors, both as citizens and dikasts, into the oaths which they have themselves sworn—infractions of which the gods are said to police—are striking. The theme of relations across generations recurs with regard to the dikasts in a pointed way. It would be 'most terrible,' Lykourgos warns the jurors, if they failed to live up to the virtue of their ancestors—who, in their allegiance to their oath, had the gods behind them—and failed to convict one who had so broken his oath and disgraced the city. Here we see the creative way in which Lykourgos employs this often-expressed view about divine penalties to *challenge* his audience to think about their own relationships with the gods, their ancestors, and descendants: What would

constitute their maintaining their own oaths and so protecting themselves, their offspring, and the honour and memory of their forefathers?

These speeches are, then, of great interest to the religious historian. They tell us about the ways in which different orators creatively engaged with, suggested, and deployed diverse conceptions of the gods and of their interactions with mortals. However, they must not be reduced to straightforward, unproblematic, and unencumbered reflections of 'Greek'/'Athenian' attitudes.

Herodotos

Herodotos has Greeks (and non-Greeks) praying and sacrificing, swearing and cursing, consulting oracles and interpreting omens, as well as evaluating appropriate behaviour towards the gods, inferring divine agency, and engaging in religious argumentation. Is this all Herodotos provides for the religious historian? And what sort of issues must be borne in mind when approaching his *Histories* as source? I highlight here in particular the importance of viewing Herodotos as a creative religious thinker and the limitations of too simplistic an account of his religious attitudes.

First, however, we must return to the problem of 'mining'. In 'Repositories of Information?' above, we noted in passing the difficulty in taking at face value Herodotos' engagement with the religious behaviour and beliefs of non-Greek peoples. Even remaining within Greece, we can easily illustrate the limitations of extracting details of religious practice and belief from Herodotos' text without due consideration for the context of his work as a whole. In instances in which another account of events survives, we can see clearly the way an account may be shaped by the particular agenda and interests of a given author. The Greeks' dedication at Delphi after their victory at Plataea, described by both Herodotos and Thucydides, provides one such example. Herodotos tells us that the Greek commanders, 'having collected the loot, set apart a tithe for the god of Delphi, from which was dedicated that gold tripod which rests upon the bronze three-headed serpent, very close to the altar' (9.81.1). Thucydides provides further complicating details: the Spartan regent Pausanias, we are

told, took it upon himself to have inscribed on this tripod the following elegiac verse:

> The leader of the Greeks, after destroying the army of the Medes, Pausanias, dedicated to Phoebus this memorial.

The Lakedaimonians, however, immediately defaced that inscription from the tripod and inscribed the names of all the cities which together defeated the barbarians and set up the dedication' (1.132.2).

Whereas Herodotos presents us with an image of Hellenic unity—the Greeks give thanks to the god Apollo at his Panhellenic shrine—Thucydides is concerned with the excesses of the Spartan general Pausanias; already we see the first cracks in the façade of Greek unity in the lead-up to the Peloponnesian War. Whatever the accuracy of Thucydides' information, the religious historian cannot dissociate these divergent accounts of the same religious act from the political dynamics of the different wars about which Herodotos and Thucydides write. These authors, then, are not merely interested in supplying us with isolated bits of information concerning religious practice. They reflect on and engage with religious practice as one aspect of a broader set of preoccupations.

Herodotos' engagement with the oracle at Delphi provides another illustration of this principle. In recent years, much attention has been paid to the role played by oracles and oracular consultation in Herodotos' *Histories*. Showcasing, as they do, issues of knowledge and interpretation and divine–human interaction, oracles afford Herodotos with opportunities to reflect on the character of enquirers, both individuals and city-states, on human behaviour and relations with the divine more broadly, and on the authoritative status of his own work and the interpretative demands it places on his readers (see e.g. Barker 2006; Kindt 2006).

If Herodotos 'uses' religious institutions and ideas to think through broader questions in this way, it is important to stress that he is not merely taking a ready-made set of tropes from traditional religion in a one-way transaction: rather, his own involved, reflective, and creative engagement with Delphi constitutes *part* of the messy conglomerate to which we refer as 'Greek religion' (see Harrison 2007: 374). Furthermore, we should recognize the possibility that literary texts may inform and frame religious

experience, that is to say, that the lessons learnt from reading Herodotos about oracular enquiry, divine anger, and the pendulum of fortune, for example, may plausibly bear on how one views one's own interactions with the gods (cf. Barker 2006: 3).

Finally, a brief word on the complex matter of Herodotos' religious outlook. Herodotos, in particular, has been subject to fierce debates over the question of his personal religiosity. Whereas, at one extreme, scholars have viewed Herodotos as self-consciously moving away from accounts which make appeal to divine causation, and as generally sceptical of traditional Greek attitudes, at another extreme others have viewed his project as theological through and through and have found in the *Histories* a sustainable *system* of religious beliefs (cf. Lateiner 1989; Goldhill 2002: 11ff.; Harrison 2003). Of course, there is considerable middle ground between these two extremes. Part of the reason for this range of positions is the variety of attitudes which can plausibly be found in Herodotos' text (see e.g. Mikalson 2003: 146).

We find dismissals of particular claims about the gods (e.g. 5.86.3) and some notable absences (e.g. the omission of gods in Herodotos' account of the history of East–West hostilities, 1.1–5 with Goldhill 2002: 14). Yet, such features of the text do not warrant the conclusion that Herodotos could not possibly have taken seriously those aspects of Greek religion with which he was evidently preoccupied. There are, furthermore, a few cases in which he expressly favours an account which appeals to divine causation (e.g. 8.129) or alludes to divine chance, divine communication, or divine anger (e.g. 4.205, 5.92.3, 9.100, 6.27). We cannot dismiss all these passages as merely a means of appealing to the (less well-educated) masses or reporting unreflectively traditional views (see Gould 1994: 94; Harrison 2000: 1–30).

In a different vein, Robert Fowler has shown how Herodotos approaches reflection on the gods in a way that is qualitatively different from the sort of approach that we encounter in Homer or Hesiod, and how this difference relates to the very different nature of Herodotos' enquiry and project as he conceived it. We do not find in the pages of Herodotos the types of interactions between gods or between gods and men that we encounter in the verses of Homer and Hesiod. Instead, the inquisitive and epistemologically circumspect *histor* adopts an approach to the gods which is fundamentally continuous with his approach to the human sphere:

he *infers* the gods' agency and overall direction of human affairs from events within the limitations and conditions of his uninspired and conjectural inquiries (Fowler 2010, 2011: 59ff.). We might relate this suggestion of a qualitatively different approach to reflection on the gods to a broader tendency in prose sources, from history to oratory to philosophical and medical works, to appeal, not to individual named gods, but, arguably in a more epistemologically circumspect way, to generic divine powers unidentified by name (e.g. *to theion, ho theos, hoi theoi*).

Of course, there is a great deal more that could be said about the complex question of Herodotos' religiosity. But the considerations sketched out here suffice to caution against over-schematizing Herodotos' approach to the divine, and to offer some sense of the ways in which Herodotos confronts the religious historian with a distinctive, involved, and creative way of thinking with and about religion.

Pausanias

As Pausanias leads us with confidence and authority across the Greek world, it is all too easy to forget that this is, in many ways, a world of his own making. Louise Bruit Zaidman and Pauline Schmitt Pantel, for example, make central use of Pausanias—the 'indefatigable curious traveller'—in their reconstructions of the cult life of the Greek sites (2000: 18), without, however, addressing the question of the motivations and complications which underpin Pausanias' account. Yet Pausanias himself remarks explicitly that he is omitting what he deems trivial in favour of those things 'most worthy of being recalled' (3.11.1, cf. 1.39.3, 8.54.7)—the subjectivity of his account is clearly marked. If Pausanias' experiential style can sometimes lure the reader into feeling they have 'seen' a site in all its detail, his emphasis on ritual and cult as lines of continuity between past and present ('still in my day . . .') lure the reader into accepting the authenticity of his imperial text as a straightforwardly veridical testament to Archaic and Classical Greek religion, as if those Archaic and Classical cults, monuments, and stories had not gone through diverse and complex processes of reception and modification in the intervening centuries (see Pirenne-Delforge 2006 for an illustration). Pausanias has a tendency to overlook the more recent past in favour of

ancient history (we noted in the section ‘Repositories of Information?’ his relative marginalization of the Imperial cult), viewing and evaluating stories about gods and heroes and practices performed in their honour through a framework which privileges age and tradition as criteria of assessment (see Hutton 2005: 305; Pirenne-Delforge 2008: 337ff.). Such criteria render Pausanias’ construction of Greece and Greek identity ‘a form of resistance to the realities of Roman rule’ (Elsner 1992: 5). The relatively static image of Greek culture which Pausanias affords should be read with caution.

Pausanias’ invaluable insights into local cults need similarly to be approached with care. The pronounced emphasis in Pausanias’ text on the *poikilia*, the rich variety of Greek culture, finds a careful counterpoint in his underlying assumption of Panhellenic unity in relation to which he understands and portrays such local diversity. In Pausanias we find a Greece which seeks to be understood neither through nor against Roman rule (see Hutton 2005: 311ff.; Pirenne-Delforge 2006, 2008). In constructing a Panhellenic perspective against which to view local religion, Pausanias, at the same time, constructs himself as an authority capable of this kind of exegesis and illumination. He not only relays but also eruditely contrasts and passes judgement on local accounts (e.g. 2.23.5f.). Pirenne-Delforge has explored, *inter alia*, Pausanias’ approach to the ‘universal’ Greek pantheon in the face of local diversity, through his pointed use of vocabulary: the term *theos*, she notes, is never qualified by the term *epichorios*, which is elsewhere common as a description of local practices, tales, and even heroes and *daimones* in Pausanias’ work. Again, we also find Pausanias relating figures which are identified locally solely by an *epiklesis* (cult title) to gods of the traditional pantheon (such as his association of the Agathos Theos at Megalopolis to Zeus) (Pirenne-Delforge 2008: ch. 5). We see here, then, how a given author’s interests and agenda might yield a reflective and creative (but not necessarily accurate) way of shaping information about cults and gods. In relating local religious phenomena to Panhellenic ones, Pausanias engages in a novel equivalent to *interpretatio Graeca*, which may not reproduce the way individual local communities themselves perceived these cults and figures of worship, or the way they felt they related to wider Greek models.

A productive way in which some religious historians have approached Pausanias and his text is to think of him as a pilgrim writing for other pilgrims (see e.g. Elsner 1992). But what do we mean by 'pilgrimage'? What sort of motivations does the term imply on the part of the 'pilgrim'? What sort of relationship does it envisage between 'pilgrim' and god? Rutherford has explored the relation between Pausanias' text and the Greek practice of *theoria* (itself a complex term encompassing, for example, both civic delegations to sanctuaries and individual attendance at festivals) (Rutherford 2001). *Theoria* blurs the distinctions between intellectual activity and religious experience, or between pilgrimage and 'recreational sightseeing': to view and to discuss the sites and sounds of religious festivals was, as Rutherford has well illustrated, as much part of the religious experience as the sacrificial act, sung paean, or Dionysiac tragedy. Against this background, Pausanias' *Periegesis* is itself *part* of a religious complex of activities—a vicarious form of engaging in the religious activity of *theoria*. Pausanias' text (like Herodotos' oracle-narratives) may also frame or inform religious experiences. By repeatedly re-enacting Pausanias' *theoria* for us, the text may shape how we understand or undertake *theoria* ourselves.

So, finally, does Pausanias' text provide us insight into 'personal' religious experience? For some scholars, Pausanias' self-conscious status as *pepaideumenos* is inconsistent with an identity as pilgrim; his apparent piety constitutes a literary persona befitting an author of the Second Sophistic. I stressed above, in 'Critical Prose Sources', that self-consciously critical, sophisticated, and educated thinkers need not espouse general hostility to traditional religious attitudes and practices. They may, rather, develop distinctive ways of thinking about such attitudes and practices. To overlook or explain away such passages as Pausanias' famous claim (8.8.2–3) that, since visiting Arcadia, he has come to re-evaluate his opinion of certain *logoi*, which he once dismissed as silly stories but now sees contain some kind of wisdom, in favour of a 'rational' reading of the *Periegesis*, is to oversimplify a complex text (see Hutton 2005: 304f.).

Pausanias' description of the oracle of Trophonios at Lebadeia provides an example of his own engagement with the religious sites he observes and describes. His account is both detailed—describing the complex preparatory rituals undertaken before an oracle consultation and precise

architectural details—and emotionally charged. A prospective consultant who receives positive omens from the preparatory sacrifices ‘goes down with true hope’, receives his oracle (after a claustrophobic and dramatic entry), and leaves ‘possessed with terror and hardly knowing himself or the things around him’, unable, temporarily, to laugh or to think straight (9.39.4–14, trans. Levi 1979, with modifications). The echoes between this description and Aristides’ evocative ‘personal’ accounts of his encounters with Asklepios are pronounced (see e.g. 2.23 K for Aristides’ altered perception on seeing the god). At the same time, both authors intimate the limits of the communication of religious experiences. The inadequacy of Aristides’ words as an accurate record of all that he experienced in his dealings with Asklepios is a constant refrain of the work (e.g. 1.1, 2.1, 2.8 K), emphatically reminding the reader of what is not being communicated. Similarly, Pausanias’ own experience when he ‘went down to Trophonios’ is left unspoken. For this, the reader will have to visit themselves, since each person experiences it differently.

Pausanias’ account of Trophonios also includes a cautionary tale, through which Pausanias, like Herodotos, teaches us how not to approach the oracle. He tells how one of Demetrios’ bodyguards, who fulfilled none of the proper rites and had intended to rob the shrine, was killed going down, his body appearing elsewhere (9.39.12). By including this story, Pausanias participates in shaping the expectations and experience of the visitor and in praising the god. Pausanias’ description of the oracle at Lebadeia, then, well illustrates several of our principle concerns: it engages actively and reflectively with this religious site and offers a unique representation of an individual’s experience of it, while, at the same time, self-consciously recognizing its own limitations as an account of religious experience.

Suggested Reading

Feeney 1998, though focused on Rome, is an excellent introduction to the question of literature’s relationship to religion. Harrison 2007 explores many of the issues surrounding literary sources specifically in the context of Greek religion. Goldhill 2002 offers an accessible and lively account of the development of prose as a distinct literary style in the Classical period.

Studies of individual authors and their approach to religion are numerous (see e.g. Hornblower 1992 on Thucydides, Parker 2004 on Xenophon, Osborne 1997 on Heraklitos, and Petsalis-Diomidis 2010 on Aristides). For the orators, see Parker 1997 and Martin 2009. Mikalson 2003 and Harrison 2000 provide divergent studies of the religion of Herodotos. For Pausanias, Elsner 1992 remains important, while Pirenne-Delforge 2008 offers both a helpful overview of past approaches and a rich, close reading of the *Periegesis*.

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Unless otherwise stated, translations are the author's own.

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CHAPTER 7

LITERARY EVIDENCE—POETRY

RENAUD GAGNé

A well-known anecdote from Strabo (8.3.30) describes how the sculptor Pheidias designed his masterpiece, the great statue of Zeus in the sanctuary of Olympia, as a reflection of three verses from Homer's *Iliad* (1.528–30). The most prestigious and authoritative cult image of the high god is there presented as the solid shape of epic verse, a massive stone monument carved out of a monument of poetry. The *locus classicus* on the question of poetry as the template for divine forms is Herodotos 2.53, where the historian famously writes that Homer and Hesiod 'taught the Greeks of the descent of the gods, and gave to all their several names, and honours, and arts, and indicated their outward shapes'. For Herodotos in that passage, the main point is that the poems of Homer and Hesiod, the oldest Greek poems, are in fact relatively recent, and much older sources are now available to actual scrutiny—a new, tangible knowledge opened by *historie* over the territory previously held by the Muses and the masters of their truth.

Other critics of Homer and Hesiod, such as Xenophanes (DK B 14–16) or Empedokles (DK B 27–9), contested the anthropomorphism of epic in its depiction of divine bodies, and offered alternatives that emphasized the gods' non-human form (on epic, see also Martinez, Chapter 11 in this volume). The authority of the early poets was the great rival that had to be

supplanted. Early historiography and the other forms of novel wisdom and science that flourished at the time, including the ethical and natural investigations that will come to be known as philosophy, had to break down the hold of the poets on *aletheia* in order to carve their own epistemic space, often through the language of poetry itself. That sustained contestation of the old foundations of knowledge constitutes a watershed in the history of Greek culture. Transformed into something else by the appropriations of exegesis, or reduced to fiction and confined to the aesthetic realm, the special claim of inspired poetry to access a privileged reality eventually lost its former predominance in the course of the Classical period, although it never disappeared entirely. Poetry continued to play a major part in subsequent phases of Greek religion, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, but the stage had been thoroughly changed. Still a fundamental medium for expressing the religious imagination, as well as a central presence in cult, poetry's authority now derived mostly from symbolic capital and reinterpretations and the archive, less from the production of new texts. Callimachus was indeed an important religious thinker of his time, but no one could confuse him with Hesiod. The present chapter will be concerned with some of the religious roles of poetry before that fundamental cultural shift. It will attempt to answer one question: What kind of evidence does Archaic and Classical verse provide for the study of early Greek religion? It will not seek to assess the notoriously difficult task of using poetry as a source of religious *realia*, painstakingly mined in the hope of recovering echoes of ritual language, cult practices, sanctuary space, or even belief. Rather, it will be interested in poetry itself as an agent of religious thought.

The impact of poetic texts on the religious imagination of their audiences is a particularly important aspect of the question at hand. One recurrent assertion in our sources is that poetry coloured what the Greeks saw when they saw a god. The vivid narratives of epic, the catalogues of didactic poetry, hymnic evocations, oracular hexameters, the sumptuous tableaux of monodic lyric, the marriage of movement and verbal image enacted in choral performance, or the three-dimensional mimesis of drama, all forced their audiences to conjure synesthetic images of divinity. Sometimes a single adjective can serve as the support of that vision, as the epithet *glaukopis* so commonly applied to Athena, or *boopis* for Hera, words that were interpreted in wildly different ways early on, as the

scholia attest. A whole passage will trace the particular contours of the god's shape on other occasions, as in the description of Typhon in *Theogony* 823–35. But most of these texts often contained precious little descriptive detail of divine bodies, and the imagination of the individual audience member was left to its own devices when supplying the missing details.

Still, the audience regularly had to conjure these forms in the mind's eye through the exigencies of narrative, with their attributes and specificities. The ideal, yet uncannily impersonal, anthropomorphic appearance that is so often chosen to embody the presence of divinity in narrative frequently suggests the awesome, ineffable power which inhabits that *morphe* of a moment, and actually threatens mere mortals when it is revealed to them in its full power (e.g. *HH* 2.275–80; *HH* 5.181–90). The fragmentary focalization of poetry is the necessary channel for the contemplation of that reality beyond vision.

It is, of course, wrong to believe that the physical images of the gods (on which, see Scheer, Chapter 12 in this volume) were dependant on the images of song, or vice versa. The representational dialogue between poetry, on the one hand, and sculpture and painting on the other, was a complex one at any time, and it certainly went in both directions, with each medium speaking its own language. The difficulty of translating one into the other is well illustrated by an anecdote found in Ion of Chios' *Epidemiai* (*FGrH* 392 F 6), where the tragedian Sophokles, a contemporary of Ion, is found berating a pretentious man at a symposion for misunderstanding the different colour idioms of poetry and painting. When 'the poet' (that is, Pindar) depicts Apollo as 'golden haired' (*chrysokomas*), this does not mean that the painter should represent the god with blond hair, Sophokles says in the text, as the painting 'would not be as good' if the artist actually made the god's hair golden rather than black (the quote comes from *Ol*. 6.41). The codes of each art cannot be converted so easily into the other. Notwithstanding the interesting aesthetic issues raised by the anecdote, what stands out for us is the actual misinterpretation staged by the story, and the method of resolution to the disagreement: Sophokles vanquishes his foe by an overwhelming demonstration of culture and rhetoric.

The poor pedantic grammarian clearly had no chance before the great playwright. But his 'error' of literalism must have been a perfectly

common reading of the poetic image, one that would have been reproduced countless times at other symposia, and it is probably fair to say that, in the majority of these cases, one of the most prominent poets of the age was not there to offer an authoritative solution. Who controls the poetic images of the gods? And, more importantly, who controls their interpretation? The flagrant contradictions that existed between the different kinds of divine representation were there for all to see and to decode. The visual culture of divinity that informed symposiasts in the time of Sophokles was characterized by great diversity and disagreements, constantly confronted to each other and creatively reinterpreted, where the many different images of the gods produced by interaction with poetry were never far from the mind. How could they be? A pillar of the education of everyone in the cities, male and female, citizen and slave, the performance of poetry remained a fundamental tool of socialization throughout people's lives, both as a shared object of reflection, and as a marker of discrimination: the touchstone that allowed one to make a distinction between those who belonged in the group and those who did not. This was especially true of participation in the local choral dances and songs that played such an important role in the ritual lives of the poleis and the upbringing of both girls and boys in the Greek world, but it was certainly not confined to *choreia*. That is the essential reason behind Plato's attacks on Homer and tragedy. Conflicts of knowledge lie at the heart of Greek religion.

A live web of different poetic cultures criss-crossed the Greek world, composed of a great many intertwined strands in a constant but circumscribed process of change. Few songs were entirely local, and the commonly used terms epichoric and Panhellenic, which remain very useful in this regard, must be handled with caution if we want to avoid overly artificial distinctions. Song culture in the Greek world was never just a matter of social coherence and cultural cohesion, but offered the individual a vast grid of potential alternatives, stances, and choices of reference for any situation. Poetry was one of the main mediators of divine reality, a comprehensive cognitive filter that provided the individuals with the building blocks of their imagination on the matter. What these blocks actually were for each individual, and what he or she did with them at various times, was ultimately a matter of chance, life history, and personal choice.

What the Greeks knew about the gods, not only their bodies, obviously, but also their genealogy, their activity, their attributes, they predominantly knew by the intermediary of song—and not just works by Homer and Hesiod. It is, first and foremost, through these songs that the narratives of myth took shape and were transmitted over the generations and the many lands of the Greek world, as numerous speeches and dialogues attest. Pausanias, for instance, can still accept the authority of the grand old epics as a basis for plausible investigation, against the mere opinion (*pheme*) of local tradition (9.41). Poetic language found its way into the language of ritual practice, such as the Bacchic gold leaves, or the cult epithet *krateropHron* applied to Herakles, which clearly derives from hexameter poetry, and found its way to sanctuaries from Sicily to Phrygia (Leumann 1950: 327). Over and above the old wives' tales mentioned by Plato (*Resp*. 350e; *Hp. mai*. 285e–6a; *Grg*. 527a), or the casual talk at the symposion, it was the finally crafted songs of the poets that shaped the references informing the Greek religious imagination concerning the nature of their gods.

But what these songs said about the gods was far from uniform, of course. Some of the most basic facts about a god could vary from text to text: Aphrodite is the daughter of Ouranos in Hesiod's *Theogony* 154–206, but her parents are Zeus and Dione in *Iliad* 5.370. These variants can be found concerning many aspects of the genealogy, attributes, and activity of most of the gods found in our sources. When the characters of Plato's *Symposium* try to define the nature of the god Eros, to take a notorious example, wildly different interpretations of the most basic traits of his power and character are proposed, many of them grounded in the words and generic language of competing poetic representations, starting with Homer's *Iliad* and Hesiod's *Theogony*, and ending with tragedy. A deep and playful experimentation with contemporary forms of Greek thought, the dialogue attests to the great flexibility of divine representations in the sympotic culture it portrayed, and the essential roles played by songs in justifying the competing claims to its knowledge.

Poetry offered much ground for such spectacles of disagreement about the gods, both in its claims to embody tradition and in its appeals to the novelty of a break with the past. The many different portraits of the invisible presented by poetry in this religious system, based on the 'unknowability' of divinity, were constantly contested. The variety of

poetic voices that were vying for authority at the time is impressive and noteworthy. Some traditions had clear ideological agendas, others cultivated a more open polyphony, but all strove for distinction. In the contests of the symposium, the musical *agones*, or the dramatic competitions, verse was shaped through conflict with other verses, and the meaning of songs was grounded in a poetics of contrast. That is a situation already in place in our earliest records. Far from passively *reflecting* the deep structures of myth, or the versions of native lore, poetic depictions of the gods were actively engaged in moulding the tales themselves, configuring them to the specific orientations of their text and authorial voice, and often engaged in competition with other contemporary texts and figures.

The song that claimed authority on divine matters could invoke the presence of the Muses, and assert a direct access to the inspired knowledge provided by the daughters of Mnemosyne. Other songs could claim the authorship of poets with special links to the divine, such as Epimenides, Musaios, or Orpheus. Most, however, did not do either. They all had, in any case, to negotiate a place in relation to tradition, a stance between the poles of appropriation and contestation. Following the path of tradition meant inscribing a song over other songs, participating in a concert of voices that was both synchronically and diachronically larger than the individual performance of the here and now. Without moving away too far from the expectations of tradition, the song had to mark its specificity, and build the characteristics that made it stand out. Not limited to introductory hymns or proems such as Hesiod's *Theogony* 1–115 or *Works and Days* 1–10, or those emphatically self-reflexive passages of programmatic statements such as *Iliad* 2.484–92, the construction of authority and the definition of a song's situation in regard to tradition were more generally woven deep in the text as a whole, patterned with a myriad different strands. The internal logic of a poem is part of the armature of its authority. Only by taking the time to enter the text through close reading, and engaging with the nuances of its language and imagery, can these patterns be made discernible and properly assessed. I propose, in what follows, to look at one particularly rich example of that poetic negotiation of tradition, the claim to authority of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, an important 'literary hymn' from the sixth century BCE (on hymns, see also Versnel, Chapter 30 in this volume).

‘How shall I hymn you, well-hymned (*euhymnos*) as you are in every respect?’. With these words from line 19, the poet of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* marks the transition that will lead away from the divine realm of Olympos and the introduction of Leto’s son to the society of the gods into the human landscapes of cities and cult and the celebration of Zeus’ son in the world of men. The inscription of the divinity in the space and time of the hymnic narrative conjures a veritable map of the deity that is made an immediate interlocutor in the present of the performance: it locates him in myth and cult, and weaves a web of correspondences between that distant configuration and the *hic et nunc*. Line 19 opens the section of the hymn that is devoted to the presence of the god on the island of Delos. Apollo is ‘well-hymned’, in that ‘fields of song’ are laid down for him everywhere: the whole land glorifies him. That statement contains a complex poetic programme of great religious significance.

The ‘fields of song’ image of line 20 underlines the profound imbrication of land and poetry staged by the hymn. The passage goes out of its way to express the reach of these fields of song, which are found in all possible areas, both high and low, enumerated in lines 21–4. The imbrication of land and poetry that makes Apollo *euhymnos* is boundless, which is what makes the choice of the poem so difficult. The singer has to decide where and when his song is to be set in this limitless field of possibilities. As all land brings joy to Apollo because of what he has done there and the songs that celebrate these events, the hymn can start from anywhere. From this general statement of spatial universality, the poem moves to the specifics of precise location. The transition is marked by another question, which points to one event, the birth of Apollo, and the place where it happened, the island of Delos. To further emphasize where the island is, and its relative position in regard to other places, the passage proceeds to relate all the locations where the birth of Apollo did *not* happen, spaces defined by a lack in comparison to Delos (lines 30–46). This is more than a priamel. The identification of that negative space, the enumeration of all the sites that refused to welcome Leto when she was about to give birth to the god, is organized as a circular spiral topography around the island. The whole Aegean is traced by this map of names. Only by virtue of the stories that did not happen in these locations is the story of Delos made possible. As has long been recognized, most of the sites named in the list have a significant cultic link to Apollo (see Kowalzig

2007: 72–80). But what stands out from the spatial web of the poem is the way these places—some of them, like Athens, Samos, or Miletos, significant regional powers in the sixth century BCE—are positioned in a relation of dependence to the tiny island of Delos. The great gathering is located in the centre of the circle drawn by the peregrinations of Leto around the sea. The lands that once refused the arrival of the god at the edges of the Aegean now rejoice in his honour at its middle.

Just as the songs that praise Apollo are embedded in all regions of the world, the sanctuaries of the god are innumerable, as well as the places that find favour with him. But no location is beloved by the god more than Delos, we are told, when the Ionians are assembled for the festivities (146–8). At the heart of this event is a peerless wonder: the local chorus of the Delian Maidens described in 156–76. The Maidens 'know how to imitate' the voices of all men, so that 'anyone might think it was he himself speaking' (162–4). All song is concentrated in their song: they reproduce what comes from outside, and embody its likeness in all aspects of language and sound. In this, they function as a parallel to the centripetal force of the festival itself, its ability to gather the whole Aegean in one central location. Just as the island becomes host to the entire region, the chorus of the Delian Maidens contains the songs of all men.

The song they start with is a hymn to Apollo, followed by a hymn to Artemis and Leto, before they 'turn their thoughts to the men and women of old and sing a song that charms the people': another hymn (158–9). Through this evocation of the Maidens' choral *mimesis*, what the passage is underlining is the breadth of their range: both gods and mortals, both male and female, their song encompasses the core of poetry. It is a hymn to Apollo that stands at the beginning of their miraculous performance, one that is located at the very heart of the nexus of Apolline song and place staged by the poem. The invitation to contrast the hymn presently performed in the *hic et nunc* of the audience with the hymn of the Delian Maidens portrayed in the text could not be clearer.

The point is explicitly brought forward by the direct encounter of the persona of the text's author himself with the Delian chorus at lines 165–76. Switching to a dramatic mode, the poet addresses the chorus directly, as if present on site 'here' (*enthade*) in Delos, and asks them to commemorate his song for all time to come. When a man next comes from abroad to ask who is their favourite singer, they are to answer: 'it is a blind

man, and he lives in rocky Chios; all of his songs remain supreme afterwards' (166–73). There can be little doubt that the blind poet is related to the first-person singular voice of the text, as embodied in performance, something that makes the shift of the first-person plural of the next line particularly puzzling. Is this a reference to a group of singers? Does it point to the plurality of rhapsodic performances that are to follow (Nagy 1996: 214–25)? Various scenarios have been proposed, and none has been generally accepted. What is certain is that the statement concerns the persona of the poet, and continues the description of the exchange that is to be made between him and the chorus. While the collective chorus sings the praise of the individual poet whose song has come to it, the collective performers of the epic poetry embodied by the poet will sing the praise of the individual chorus, and the individual island, in the countless lands and cities where they will carry their song. Following the centripetal movement of songs and lands towards Delos, the centrifugal diffusion of the hymn throughout the region furthers the depth of praise offered to the god. The chorus that contains all other songs has identified this one hymn as the superior song. As it unfolds in performance here and now, the answer to the question of how the poem is to hymn the well-hymned god involves every member of the audience in a landscape of other songs and performances that trace the contours of a vast area of significance. Appropriating the authority of the fixed chorus of the maidens, the mobile hymn of the blind poet of Chios establishes itself as the one voice that stands out in the whole of the Aegean.

The narrative circle is complete, and the poem consequently gives signs of closure. But the first-person voice of the narrator continues its intervention and announces that 'and myself, I shall not cease from hymning the far-shooter Apollo of the silver bow, whom lovely-haired Leto bore' (177–8). Building on a variant of the traditional formulas that usually end hymns and point forward to another performance, these two lines reverse expectations and lead us back to a new beginning, the start of the hymn's second half, the so-called 'Hymn to Pythian Apollo'. The parallel between the two constructions is clearly emphasized. The question of line 19 is restated word for word at line 207: 'How shall I hymn you, well-hymned (*euhymnos*) as you are in every respect?' The new answer leads to the evocation of a different map of significant space.

As in the first half of the hymn, the lines that answer the question open the vista of alternative songs and stories that the poem *could* follow. The section, similarly, is traced around the evocation of a distinctive space. The parallel is striking: an initial scene on the summit of Olympos (186–206) is followed by a series of itineraries that map out an area of relevant geography. In search of the seat of his great oracle, Apollo descends from the great northern mountain to travel south, passing through a variety of places on the way (lines 216–44). As in the case of Delos, the site of Delphi is chosen as the result of a rejection from another land (245–99). Apollo's subsequent search for the ministers of his new oracular shrine will take him back to Crete, the site of the original starting point for the great circular trajectory of the 'Hymn to Delos' (lines 409–39). But instead of drawing a circle around the east of Greece, his trajectory in guiding the Cretan men to Delphi goes in the opposite direction, and adds the whole western part of the Greek landmass to the map of Apolline space drawn by the poet, taking on all of the Peloponnese in the process. The three itineraries of the hymn touch, but do not overlap. They correspond to the three regions of humankind identified by the poem: 'those who live in the fertile Peloponnese', 'those who live in the Mainland', and 'those who live in the seagirt islands' (247–52). Giving shape to a space that goes from Olympos in the north to Crete in the south, from the Ionian Sea to the coast of Asia Minor, they encompass the whole of 'non-colonial' Greece, at any rate. The endpoint of the last two, Delphi, is placed right at the nominal centre of this Apolline geography. Just as Delos is displayed as the middle point of the Aegean in the first part of the hymn, Delphi comes out as the centre of Greece. The poetic landscape created by the deployment of geographical lists in the poem, and the elegant combination of the parallel, complementary spaces from the two halves of the hymn, formalizes the traditional proposition that Delphi is the navel of the world.

The choice of Delos and Delphi allows the hymn to incorporate all the spaces and, by extension, all the other songs of the well-hymned god. The poem's evocation of time follows a parallel course. Essential to the idea that the songs are grounded in space is the idea that these spaces commemorate an event. The focus of each half of the hymn on a particular location is a celebration of an event that took place there in the distant past, and of the rituals that still commemorate it even now. To understand how the two moments are complementary, and how their combination can

be said to evoke a complete image of the god in the world, it is important to consider how each event is linked to a different episode taking place on Olympos in the text.

The first moment, the birth of Apollo on Delos, is associated with the arrival of Apollo on the divine mountain, and his first acceptance into the society of the gods (1–13). The threat of divine conflict is an important thread of this episode. It is Hera's hostility to Leto that creates the crisis of Apollo's dramatic birth, and his arrival on Olympos has ominous overtones of potential struggle. A powerful young god carrying a stringed bow, he provokes fear among the gods when he first appears to them. Apart from Zeus, they all rise in his presence, *trembling*. Will the young god contest the power of his father and reignite the War in Heaven with the claim of a new generation? His warm welcome by Zeus immediately appeases the tension. Disarmed of his bow by his mother, offered the nectar of divine society by his father, Apollo has entered the community of the gods without strife. The hymn begins with the outcome of its initial narrative, the mutual recognition of father and son, and the overcoming of Hera's hostility, a divinity that, as it happens, was prominently honoured on the island of Delos.

The second part of the hymn, which also starts on Olympos, follows a parallel structure to the first part. Now established as a powerful god throughout the world, with major sanctuaries in Lydia and Lykia, in Miletos, Delos, and Delphi (179–85), Apollo is no longer the young god making his way to the land of his father, but a great voice at the heart of Olympos. The festivities of the gods described in the poem are reminiscent of the festivities of men taking place on Delos, with a clear echo underscored between the chorus of the Muses and the Delian Maidens. The Muses, like the Maidens, sing of gods and men, and their song is also a hymn (190). All the gods who are named as participating in those festivities belong to the same generation; that is, they are all children of Zeus, a fact foregrounded by Aphrodite being identified as Zeus' daughter (195), a statement that clears any possible confusion with other traditional genealogies. United in a great circle dance, holding each other by the wrists, the generation of Zeus' children rejoice in harmony—indeed, Harmony herself is part of the choral celebrations (for Harmony as a daughter of Zeus, see Gantz 1993: 215). Apollo is at the centre, leading the dance with his kithara under the joyful gaze of Zeus and Leto (201–6).

His generation is united in its celebration of Olympos, with Apollo at its head. An answer to the unstringed bow of the first half of the poem, the stringed kithara seals the union of generations, the renunciation of strife, and the power of song to embody the rhythms of cosmic concord (cf. Monbrun 2007).

After going up to Olympos, Apollo now moves away from it as one of its agents. It is outside of Olympos that the stringed bow reappears as a defining attribute of the god. The central event of the hymn's second half, the foundation of Delphi, is built on a moment of violence, the slaying of a dragon by the god. This Delphi is the place where the dragon rots. A long ring-composition at the core of this section relates how Hera, furious at the birth of Athena, resolved to stay away from the company of the gods and produce a child of her own: Typhon (300–74). A particularly vivid scene describes how she hit the ground with the flat of her hand and demanded the child from the primordial powers of earlier generations (334–9). The primordial forces she addresses are the previous rulers of heaven, among whom are the defeated enemies of Zeus, now locked in Tartaros. Demanding, as she does, that her child be more powerful than Zeus, just as Zeus was more powerful than Kronos, is nothing less than to tear the cosmos asunder. Hera's rage reopens the War in Heaven (Strauss Clay 2006: 67–71).

The awesome Typhon, traditionally portrayed as the greatest threat and the last challenge to the order of Zeus, is made the son of Hera in this version and this version alone. Prominently linked to Ge, the divinity usually identified as Typhon's mother, in her prayer for the child, it is Hera who becomes the mother of all danger in the poem. This is a distinctive version of the myth that writes itself upon tradition and belongs to the distinctive narrative logic of the text. The birth of Typhon is the reverse mirror of the birth of Apollo, Typhon the cosmic challenge that Apollo emphatically is not. Hera's opposition to the birth of Apollo in the first half of the hymn is answered by her own pregnancy in the second half in opposition to the birth of Athena. That continued antagonism is marked by a contrast to the refusal of lands to welcome Apollo in both halves of the hymn: the earth herself accepts the birth of Typhon. It is on the future site of Delphi that he is welcomed by the dragon to be reared, not on Olympos, as Apollo, and from there that he will launch his assault on Olympos.

Apollo's foundation of Delphi is inscribed on the site of the alternative world threatened by the arrival of Typhon.

The poem is entirely silent about the battle of Zeus and Typhon. It only mentions Apollo's slaying of the dragon on the future site of the temple, the point of departure, and conclusion of the poem's long ring-composition on the birth of the great adversary of divine order. Just as Herakles, that other son of Zeus, will be famous for exterminating the offspring of Typhon at the four corners of the world, Apollo slays the creature that reared the monster at the very centre of the universe. This highly selective reference to one of the determinant events of Archaic Greek cosmogony allows the poem to activate a relevant background of meaning against which to highlight the specificities of its own themes. The slaying of the dragon confirms the final triumph of the young god over the enmity of Hera—the dragon is an intermediary that allows for the avoidance of a direct confrontation between the gods of the Olympian pantheon. By killing the beast and laying down the foundations of his temple, Apollo vanquishes once and for all the forces that have opposed him since his birth.

His victory confirms the cosmic power of Zeus. Just as the birth of Apollo happens despite the attempts of Hera to limit the reproductive powers of her husband, the death of the dragon consecrates the failure of her own reproductive power and her challenge to his rule. With the killing of the serpent, Apollo becomes an integral part of his father's final and complete dominion over the universe. Male rule is definitively imposed over female opposition. The powers of earlier generations, Ge and Ouranos, as well as the Titans, are defeated once and for all. The foundation of Delphi on this site seals the constitution of Olympian order. Literally built over the corpse of the creature that reared the last challenge to it, it consecrates the alliance of later generations against the older forces of primordial times. Just as it is literally at the centre of space, Delphi is thus also figuratively at the centre of time. It is certainly not a coincidence that this is the place that will become the seat of the oracular voice that knows 'what has been, what is, and what shall be': a channel for the knowledge of Zeus himself.

Reducing the internal logic of a poem to a combination of discrepancies imperfectly brought together by chance hardly does justice to the intricate parallels that make the different parts of the text echo each other, and that

were experienced as a whole by the audiences of the text that we actually have. The combination of the Delian and Delphic halves of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* is more than an assemblage of disparate elements, but a carefully crafted tableau built on parallels and responsions. Grounded in these two complementary poles, the presence of the god is projected over the entire Greek domain, and inscribed in the fabric of time that made the universe what it is. The aim is to encompass the full range of the god's presence. The song makes a claim over all other songs of Apollo, elevating the hymn over any one event, any one place, or any one performance. Designed for perennity throughout the cities of Greece, the poem gives an authoritative shape to the power of the god. Its own recurrent performance over the centuries is a powerful answer to the repeated question of lines 19 and 207.

The hymn conjures an image of the god that claims the authority of tradition as a whole. The rhetoric of Panhellenism it deploys from beginning to end projects an all-encompassing vision that surpasses the perspective of any one place of cult or any one song, and ties them all together in one general picture of common significance. The discourse of authority displayed by the hymn could nominally sustain itself in any performance or occasion. But at no time was there any outside force to defend it efficiently, no priesthood or recognized arbiters of orthodoxy to remind the audience of its truth and tell them what it meant (Parker 2011: 40–63). That is a predicament it shares with most other poetic texts. What is the meaning of Zeus *Aigiochos*? Is it Zeus 'the Aegis-Bearer', or 'Goat-Rider' Zeus (see West 1978: 366–8)? What is the meaning of Hermes *Eriounios*? Is it 'Benefactor', or 'Fast-Runner' (see Leumann 1950: 123)? Is Hermes *Diaktoros* 'the Dispenser' or 'the Guide'? Is there one correct answer to such questions? The old formulaic epithets, obscured and misunderstood with the passage of time, became invitations for reinterpretation and exegesis, with little stability in place. The endeavours of rhapsodes to explain the real sense, the *hyponoia*, of the poems they performed were regularly derided, for instance (see Richardson 2006). The interpretive cultures of the symposium were notoriously variegated (see e.g. Pl. *Prt*. 347e). And attempts, like that of the Derveni Commentator's exegesis of an Orphic 'hymn', to impose meaning on a text—and, in this case, propose a reading of broad ritual and theological significance—had marginal impact at best. The authority of the poem could be denied as

easily as what we find in Herodotos, for instance, or dismissed entirely, as the works of so many 'Presocratics' attest. It could be transformed by allegorical exegesis, something that already appears in our sources in the sixth century BCE, and that is well attested in the Classical period (Struck 2004). It was, in any case, always mediated by the individual agency of every member of the audience, who undoubtedly understood it in different terms from most of their peers, with no recognized voices able to steer a clear and common direction. Sophokles could not direct the interpretation of every member of his audience, as he did that poor grammarian in the symposium described by Ion of Chios.

When the Muses tell Hesiod that 'we know how to say many false things similar to genuine ones, but we know, when we wish, how to proclaim true things' (*Theog*. 27–8), one implication is that the two opposites are almost undistinguishable to the human audience, and each one can lead to the other. In other words: the interpretation of the song is as important as the song itself in uncovering the truth it holds, a teaching repeated in countless verse traditions of later periods, from the riddles of the symposium and popular oracular poetry to the most refined melic poems of Pindar, who spoke 'for those who can hear' (see e.g. *Ol*. 2.85). Nowhere was this truer than in the massive spectacles of shattered knowledge and fragmented perspectives offered by tragedy to Athenian audiences throughout the Classical period, with their discordant voices, powerless choral songs, and open-ended irony. These plays recurrently staged the main figures of the heroic past faced with a world coming apart at the seams, the mutability of human fortune, and the enigma of divine inscrutability—powerful *foci* of reflection on the fundamental religious issues of the polis. As play after play explored and reconfigured the delicate edifices of tradition on divine justice and ritual action, on the cultic landscapes of the past and their many ramifications in the present, each spectator was confronted with choices of interpretation and involvement that were entirely personal (see Budelmann 2000 for the plays of Sophokles).

The religious role of tragedy is a vexed question of scholarship that cannot be properly addressed here (see Calame, Chapter 13 in this volume). Most scholars, at this point, would agree that drama should not simply be equated with ritual. Dionysos, at any rate, certainly does not hide behind every mask, and it would be absurd to reduce tragedy to the

religious dimensions of the plays, as some have done at times. These religious dimensions, for many members of the audience, had very little significance indeed. But they clearly did matter to most, and the constant questioning of the foundations of religious knowledge by tragedy was hardly just an aesthetic concern. Tragedy's 'discourse of religious exploration', to cite Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, opened a space that invited a real and constantly renewed engagement from every single viewer with the meaning of piety and cosmic order, ritual practice, and religious belief (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003). The protagonists of the plays were, in the great majority of cases, the central figures in the religious universe of the audience, and many tragedies ended with the foundation of a cult, the creation of a direct link between the dramatic *mythos* that had just unfolded and the ritual life of the present. Considering that most of these aetiological stories were set outside of Attica, tragedy actually provided its Athenian audiences with a detailed map of cult in the wider Greek world, and even beyond—reinvented for the occasion, of course. The rituals that were described and performed in every play, in any case, from sacrifice to supplication, from hymnic singing to libation and choreographed *schemata*, were in direct dialogue with the everyday religious experiences of the audience. In some cases, it can be demonstrated that tragedy did not only reflect cultic practice and imagination, but profoundly modified it (see e.g. Henrichs 1978). The fact that this discourse, and indeed performance, of religious exploration can be read as a fundamental element of stability and order, a powerful reaffirmation of the religious system of the polis, or as a transgressive questioning of religious norms designed to leave the spectators with more queries than answers, is a testament to the inexhaustible richness of these texts, and the intractable hermeneutic challenges they have and will always continue to pose.

The great popular events of the dramatic festival were, by all accounts, the most spectacular types of poetic performance of their day, but they should not be allowed to overshadow the many other types of poetry that existed at the same time, and we should always remember that nowhere did they play a comparable role to the one they had in Athens at a specific time. Pindar, for instance, presents a whole different world of negotiations with many of the same theological traditions engaged by Aeschylus. The poetic literacy and religious competence needed to navigate the many

voices of truth offered by authoritative song in the Archaic and Classical period varied a great deal from person to person, let alone group to group, city to city, region to region. Yes, Greek religion had no Church and no Scripture, as we are often reminded. But we should cease to present the flexibility of its system of authority, based on competition and rivalry, as an absence. The many unmediated choices of the individual before the grandiose claims of poetry to reveal images of divine truth created a mosaic of possibilities of immense cultural potency. This cut and thrust of immediate reception and culture in movement has left little trace, and it cannot be measured or quantified, like foundation deposits, the size of altars, or the prices of sacrificial animals on inscriptions, any more than it can be modelled, like social interactions. But it is no less important than sanctuaries or sacrifice or festivals to make sense of Greek religion. The many discrepancies of poetry, just as the even greater divergences and disagreements of its ancient (and modern) understandings, are not indications that these texts mattered little for the religious life of their audiences, but a fundamental characteristic of that lively and constantly shifting religious system, and the choices confronted by each individual. Greek religion cannot be limited to cult, whatever we mean by 'cult'. Without the vast web of poetic worlds painted in our texts, and the challenges to scholarly interpretation they entail, our knowledge of the possibilities of Greek religious experience would be thoroughly diminished, and much staler. The platitudes of positivistic certainty dismiss 'literature' from the study of Archaic and Classical religion at our loss. The many poetic texts that have come down to us contain a rich but circumscribed pool of meaning, which must be analysed for itself, not merely used to find reflections of something else, if we want to make any sense of the Greek religious imagination. The hermeneutic analysis of poetry is an essential part of any real understanding of early Greek religion.

Suggested Reading

Calame 2009b [2006] is a particularly important methodological overview of recent scholarship on poetry and religion, while Calame 2009a [2000] offers a current introduction to the poetics of myth, with good

bibliography. The synthesis of Parker 2011: 20–31 and Versnel 2011: 151–237 offer stimulating general discussions of poetry and early Greek religion, with a full set of references. Much of the scholarship of the last decades on the question has been shaped by the very different approaches of Vernant (see Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1988 and Vernant 1990) and Burkert (see 2001 and 2007). For the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, see Calame 2013, with extensive bibliography. For religion and tragedy, Seaford 1994, Henrichs 1994/1995, and Parker 2009 offer interesting paths through the scholarship.

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CHAPTER 8

EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

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INTRODUCTION

THE epigraphic evidence for ‘Greek religion’ is vast, and inscriptions have made an enormous contribution to how historians have understood many aspects of cult activity in the Greek world. Produced for a multitude of purposes, these texts were recorded on a variety of durable as well as non-durable materials (stone, lead, gold, pottery, wax, talc, bones) and found in a range of contexts (sanctuaries and other public spaces, cemeteries, private houses). Because there was no separation between ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’ in the ancient Greek world in the post-Enlightenment sense, and because religious activity was embedded into all aspects of Greek life, almost all forms of epigraphic evidence tell us something, direct or indirect, about ‘Greek religion’. It is a diverse body of material that provides a wealth of information about numerous different parts of religious life and experience, and there is subsequently a multitude of ways in which to interpret this form of evidence. This chapter offers some reflections on how past approaches and recent trends in epigraphic studies can contribute to current debates about various aspects of ‘Greek religion’.

As with all epigraphic evidence, inscriptions concerning 'Greek religion' raise questions not just about the textual content, but also about what was considered important to record in specific contexts. But inscriptions do not simply provide a body of knowledge about what happened in a particular cult. They are fundamental to understanding a host of other issues too: from audience and performance culture to commemoration and display, from the interplay between writing and oral tradition to the construction of cultural memory, from the symbolic statement of power and authority to the materiality of text (and so on). Inscriptions reveal not only how cults were organized, but also how the written word was used to interact with the gods and express religious devotion, to demarcate space, and to negotiate social relationships within religious contexts. As should be clear from this overview, inscriptions are incredibly varied. Some are monumental, very large objects, set up in central, public places by religious or political authorities, and were no doubt costly, whereas others are small, not meant to be viewed by large numbers of people (or people at all), and intensely personal. In addition, there is regional diversity and change over time.

APPROACHES AND QUESTIONS

Given the immense volume of material, epigraphers have tended to concentrate on specific types of inscription that illuminate particular aspects of Greek cult (regulations, dedications, sacrifice, oracles, etc.) or have focused on material from specific sites or sanctuaries (e.g. Delos, Delphi, Olympia). The study of inscriptions relating to Greek religion has both shaped and mirrored historiographical trends in the practice of ancient history as a whole, but, in doing so, it also reveals the assumptions and preoccupations of historians and epigraphers: from magisterial collections of all material from particular regions or sites (*IG*) to studies of legal aspects of Greek cult (Sokolowski 1969), to examinations of women's role in ritual (Osborne 2000) or the religious experience of worshippers (Parker 2011). These different approaches are all illuminating in their own right, and show the wide range of ways this material can be

used. Since 1991, the Belgian journal *Kernos* has published annually an *Epigraphic Bulletin for Greek Religion* that collects 'information on recent epigraphic discoveries and publications that enrich our knowledge of religion and cults in ancient Greece' (Chaniotis 1991: 287). With its indices and cross-referencing to other epigraphic collections (notably *SEG*), this aims to provide a useful (and highly usable) tool for scholars and students wishing to be kept up to date with recent finds and new interpretations; a glance at these indices demonstrates the wide range of topics to which epigraphic evidence contributes.

One way in which epigraphic material is useful is that it provides a different emphasis from literary or archaeological sources on certain aspects of religious life. The description of sacrifice, for example, as one of two broad types, Olympian or chthonian, is more prevalent in literary texts than in epigraphic ones (Scullion 1994, 2005; Ekroth 2007). Literary texts that describe sacrificial cakes appear to emphasize 'the spectacular and exceptional', whereas, when cakes are mentioned in epigraphic material, it seems as if they have a role in defining some functional aspect of the deity's cult because the material often goes into great detail about the precise kind of cake necessary for a particular ritual (Kearns 1994: 70). Sacrificial rituals leave different traces in different types of source material, so it is necessary to be aware of the processes behind, and reasons for, their appearance in the historical record. As Auffarth rightly points out when discussing the epigraphic depiction of sacrifice, 'we [today] see many local differences *and nothing else*. For the Greeks it is otherwise: they see the normal ritual . . . [but] there is no inscription about normality' (Auffarth 2005: 21, also 14–16; my italics). When using epigraphic evidence we must, therefore, be sensitive to the different processes that encouraged the recording of information about religious phenomena on inscriptions of different kinds compared with those which prompted their appearance in poetry, or, indeed, those which led to their appearance in the archaeological evidence. These are unlikely to be the same.

Many surveys of Greek epigraphy mention different types of inscription that are associated with religious activity, for example, religious regulations, dedications, oracles, records of sanctuary administration, and so on (see Guarducci 1987: 244–325; McLean 2002: 189–95). Indeed, one of the most frequently studied forms of epigraphic evidence associated

with Greek religion during the twentieth century was ‘sacred law’ (Sokolowski 1969). But ‘sacred law’ as a category is unsatisfactory (and has been the subject of criticism since the 1970s: Lupu 2005: 3–9; see further Parker 2004). According to Lupu (2005: 4), the term ‘sacred law’ covers material as diverse as ‘laws, decrees, statutes, regulations, edicts, treaties, contracts, leases, testaments, foundation documents, and oracles . . . issued by federations, states, civic subdivisions and magistrates, royalty, sanctuaries, religious organizations, or private individuals’. This is hardly a narrowly defined group. In essence, ‘sacred law’ as a category reflects the interests of scholars in the political and legal history of the polis as the central feature of Greek life, but this is not the only form of political organization in, nor indeed the only lens through which to view, the Greek world (Morgan 2003; Vlassopoulos 2007; Ismard 2010). Furthermore, law-making in the ancient Greek world usually involved some form of religious ritual: in Athens the assembly—as primary legislative body—performed sacrifices before each meeting, discussed religious matters, and recorded its decisions on inscriptions that called directly on the gods. Therefore, categorizing ‘sacred law’ as something separate and distinct from ‘non-sacred’ law runs the risk of misinterpreting Greek culture considerably.

The interest in ‘sacred law’ also shows how scholars have traditionally emphasized the *text* as the pre-eminent topic of investigation; in a sense, this is understandable given that these are some of the most discursive of inscriptions and they give a wealth of information (selective though this is) about ‘what happened’ within specific cults. However, few discussions of this material assess the inscriptions as *objects* in their own right, taking into account their physicality outside of the standard epigraphic publication information. Nor do they assess their materiality, how they interact with the space in which they are set up and the people who move(d) within it, or how this might change over time (see, for example, Prêtre 2011; Scott 2011). There are, of course, new approaches that move away from polis-centred treatments and focus on topics such as gendered ritual (Osborne 2000), behavioural norms (Stavrianopoulou 2009), or the relationship between written texts and oral utterances (Hitch 2008), but even taking into account the wide range of evidence covered by the term ‘sacred law’, these inscriptions are considerably outnumbered by the more formulaic (and therefore less textually interesting) dedicatory inscriptions.

Dedications themselves, on the other hand, do provide excellent evidence for thinking about inscriptions as objects as well as texts, and constitute a considerable body of evidence. Examination of the variations in language provides information about the ritual presentation of dedicatory activity and therefore people's relationships with the gods (Lazzarini 1976), but although vast numbers of votives were inscribed, most—such as (for example) fibulae, coins, or jewellery—were not, so we only know through examining their context why they were dedicated and by whom (see Philipp 1981; van Straten 1992; Comella 2002). Although there are, no doubt, exceptions, viewing inscribed dedications as a distinct group from uninscribed dedications is problematic in terms of understanding the practice itself (rather than an aspect of that practice as represented by a particular type of object at a specific site): for this, the epigraphical material must be seen alongside archaeological finds and iconographical interpretation. It should also be noted that much dedicatory activity (perhaps most?) was of items not made of durable materials such as food (Kearns 1994), drink (Jouanna 1992), or clothing (Cleland 2005), that is, things that do not readily survive. Epigraphic evidence—helpful though it is—can therefore only provide the most fleeting glimpse into this commonplace part of Greek religious life.

One way in which questions about epigraphic evidence might be further developed is in exploring how the materiality of inscriptions shaped the ways in which people interacted with the text, that is, how the object itself provided contours for the ritual experience (Tilley 2007: 19). Dedications provide an obvious starting point because many of these include texts, but they are also objects with a physicality and presence within a sanctuary, and, as such, they embodied the rituals of their dedicators, or visitors to the sanctuary, or its priests. In some cases, writing itself was the dedication, for example the abecedaria at the seventh-century BCE sanctuary of Zeus on Mount Hymettos in Attica (Langdon 1976). Raising questions about the materiality of inscriptions is important because it locates such epigraphic evidence within a variety of social and temporal networks, rather than viewing them as things divorced from their context(s), regarded simply as texts that deliver a message for historians to read (Foucault 2002 [1972]: 118). Considering texts as objects alerts us to the ways in which the rituals they allude to were embodied and given

meaning, and how these meanings might change over time (Hurcombe 2007).

What is not recorded by the epigraphic evidence, or what is lost, is arguably as important as what survives. Inscriptions can allude to aspects of cult practice that would otherwise remain unknown. But this is not the same as having evidence for that practice itself. The clothing catalogues of the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia in the east of Attica are a good example of this. These fourth-century BCE inscriptions are immensely valuable for documenting women's dedications of clothing to the goddess (*IG* II^2 1514–30). They demonstrate the range of clothes dedicated, specify their colours and patterns, and show, in some cases, that these are high-status items (Linders 1972; Cleland 2005). As such, they give an insight into aspects of the cult otherwise unknown, and allow archaeologists to repopulate the buildings of the sanctuary with people and their activities.

However, the published inscriptions were not set up in the sanctuary at Brauron itself, but on the Athenian Acropolis, where another sanctuary of Artemis was located (Linders 1972; Rhodes and Dobbins 1979). Similar inventories (reportedly copies) have been found at Brauron in the excavations of the 1950s, but they remain unpublished (*SEG* 37.30). Insofar as details of these have emerged, it seems that there are some differences between the two groups of inscriptions which might not be fully explained by patterns of survival: the Brauron examples record dedications of utensils and furniture (*SEG* 37.34), whereas there is no surviving fragment from the Acropolis which records this type of material; the Brauron inventories are supposed to date from 416/5 (the archonship of Arimnestos), whereas the Acropolis inventories record dedications in the 340s (Linders 1972; Peppas-Delmousou 1988). Whilst it is possible to suggest reasons for these differences, and to use these to investigate the relationship between the two sanctuaries (Linders 1972), the texts of the inventories themselves provide little information about the mechanics of dedication (in contrast to the fact of those dedications) and the clothes, of course, do not survive. Because of the fragmentary nature of the lists it is difficult to tell how they were coordinated, whether they are comprehensive or recorded a fraction of the dedications (the best? those from a certain group of women? those located in a specific part of the sanctuary? those moved elsewhere?). We do not know how (or whether) the clothes themselves were displayed, or whether they were

buried in the sanctuary and therefore invisible to the visitor (recent archaeological discoveries, including wooden shoes found in 2011, suggest the latter as a possibility). We do not know whether these lists were supposed to be read, nor indeed who would be interested in reading them. We can only speculate about the reasons for the documentation of *these* items rather than other dedications that were numerous (terracotta statues: Mitsopoulos-Leon 2009; votive reliefs: Steinhauer 2001). Considering the context of display, and asking why and for whom inscriptions were set up, is crucial for understanding epigraphic evidence, and crucial for interpreting aspects of Greek religion.

Thinking about epigraphic evidence, therefore, not just as 'texts on stones' but as historical documents produced for specific, and sometimes opaque, reasons, as well as objects within a landscape (human, physical, or ritual) is essential for understanding inscriptions in general, and no less true for assessing religious practice or experience within the Greek world. It is also necessary to consider how inscriptions shape, and are shaped by, historiographical trends, and how they can be variously contextualized (by site, genre, time, size, reuse, etc.). Following the organization of this handbook, the remainder of this chapter examines aspects of epigraphic evidence for 'Greek religion' by asking three questions: What does the epigraphic material reveal about how Greeks negotiated religious power and authority? How was religious devotion expressed (or how was cult activity experienced)? How did religious practice structure communities? These are necessarily selective topics, but they are chosen because they draw on three key themes of epigraphic interpretation: monumentality, commemoration, and connectivity across time and/or space. These are not mutually exclusive categories but intricately intertwined, as will become clear below.

MONUMENTALITY AND AUTHORITY

As is evident from other chapters, religious authority in the ancient Greek world was not laid down by means of sacred texts, dogma, or priests, but was configured in a number of different ways (see, e.g., in this volume,

Flower, Chapter 20). One of these was through the monumentalizing of decisions, processes, and religious practice through epigraphic display. Power and authority are negotiated in a variety of ways in inscriptions: they might demonstrate the power of the gods, the power of political authorities, the economic power of the sanctuaries themselves, or the social hierarchies of the people who used them.

Evaluating the mechanisms by which inscriptions dealing with religious matters contribute to the negotiation of power structures in the ancient world is one clear way to approach them as evidence, but these mechanisms are, of course, varied, and the reasons behind the setting-up of these texts are also diverse. Without epigraphic evidence, the importance of regulating behaviour at festivals, maintaining the sacredness of sanctuary space, or detailing the sacrificial requirements for specific occasions would be much less clear to us. It is the monumentalization of regulations (rather than the fact that regulations existed), which allows us to know that, for example, women were required to wear modestly decorated, non-transparent clothes in the procession of the Great Gods at Andania during the first century BCE (*IG* V, 1 1390; Ogden 2002); that it was not permitted to bring flowers or gold objects not intended for dedication into the sanctuary of Despoina at Lykosoura in Arkadia (*IG* V, 2 514; Loucas and Loucas 1994: 248–50); or that the deme of Thorikos in Attica required the sacrifice of a 'tawny or black goat, lacking its age-marking teeth' to Dionysos in the month of Anthesterion (*SEG* 33.147, l.33–4; Lupu 2005: 139–41). But inscriptions allow us to do more than just 'fill in the gaps'. They raise questions about the processes behind monumentalization, the choices made about what to include and what to exclude, and the different ways in which power was negotiated and authority constructed within epigraphic texts.

Monumentalization may suggest that many inscriptions that deal with matters of cult practice are concerned with power or authority in one form or another, but this is a generalization and the most important conclusions lie in the nuance. Religious authority was not only configured by regulation, it was configured by practice too (Kearns 1995; Hellström and Alroth 1996). Inscriptions may have played a role in shaping these practices, they may indeed have been a part of those practices, but they are not uncomplicated fossilizations of those practices. The regulations at Andania, for example, certainly give historians a sense of what was

important for the cult to promote, but we cannot tell from the stone whether their interest in, for example, women's dress reflected a status quo of austerity that required legitimization or one of excessive consumption that needed curtailing, or whether there were different concerns at different times. The setting-up of inscriptions may demonstrate the concerns of the religious authorities in Andania to ensure the mysteries were correctly performed, but we do not know the context of those concerns and, consequently, can interpret the responses in different ways.

Cult regulations, therefore, show the contours of religious authority and how these might be expressed. Whoever the issuing body, the fact of recording—the setting of a decision in stone—implies that the control of ritual practice was a motivating factor behind cult regulation. But there is not always a direct relationship between the publication of cult regulations and a desire to control cult practice, and examination of the relationship between orality and writing suggests a more complex connection between monumentalization and religious authority than first appears to be the case.

On the surface, it seems that the monumentalization of decisions or regulations might be important so worshippers know the rules for a particular ritual, procession, or sacrifice. Monumental texts are often set up in prominent places (sometimes, though not always, within sanctuaries), allowing ready access to those who wished to consult them. But who, in a society in which religious knowledge was deeply embedded within everyday life, would have checked these texts to find information without knowing the answer in advance? As historians, we tend to use inscriptions as mines of information about 'what happened' within a particular cult. But we are outsiders; we have limited prior cultural knowledge, apart from what we can piece together from other surviving pieces of evidence. This simply would not have been the case in the ancient world where this type of information was passed down orally, reinforced through practice, normalized and embedded into the framework of everyday life (Auffarth 2005; Chaniotis 2009, 2010). We should not assume that writing was the primary form of exerting religious authority or that these texts do so in uncomplicated ways.

Indeed, sometimes inscriptions may have been produced to give only very specific information, like costs and expenditure of sacrifice, to

obscure knowledge by controlling access to it, or as a means of social control (Thomas 1989; Linders 1992; Versnel 2002). They may be more concerned with, say, the demonstration of accountability, than with the dissemination of knowledge. The prosecution of Nikomachos, an Athenian charged with codifying and inscribing the laws at the end of the fifth century—which included a large number of cult regulations—demonstrates the sensitivity of writing down religious material (Lysias 30: Thomas 1996; Todd 1996), and it has been suggested that, during this period, writing was used more often in religious contexts by marginal groups, such as those following Orphic practices (Henrichs 2003). This might be correct as far as some texts go, although it rests, of course, on the centrality of polis religion as *the* definitional paradigm through which 'marginality' is created (a position which this handbook challenges). But the regular recording of names on dedications and grave epigrams, or the use of inscribed inventories within a range of sanctuaries, demonstrates that writing was not considered problematic in every context. Associating oneself personally with a written text through naming was not marginal at all but incredibly frequent, and practised, as far as we can tell, by a very wide cross section of ancient society. Marginality, it seems, is in the eye of the beholder.

Writing appears to have an important place within certain types of ritual behaviour, but examination of cursing, for example, demonstrates that the exertion of authority though writing in religious contexts need not take a monumental form. Placing a curse on someone aimed to affect a change in a person's behaviour; it was therefore conceived of as a repositioning of the networks of power of daily life. As far as we can tell, cursing was most likely a secretive, or rather, semi-secretive practice. It was not the reading of the tablet itself which exerted control over the targets of the curse, but instead the knowledge of it disseminated through rumour, gossip, or threats which held power for the writer (Eidinow 2007). The objects on which the texts are recorded—those which survive are found mostly on lead tablets although other materials were used—are a key part of the ritual behaviour; their materiality sometimes (though not always) mirrors the evocation of the curse, their deposition highlights the chthonic nature of the deities called upon (Eidinow and Taylor 2010). The practice of writing is clearly part of this ritual, but reading the tablet after deposition is not central to its effect.

The division between writers and readers is a useful distinction that can be applied to monumental texts too. Who the audience (or the audiences) for such inscriptions was primarily intended to be—or whether they were important at all for the writers of the texts—is very much open for debate. But it makes a difference to our view of ritual behaviour and experience whether the people taking part in the rituals were supposed to read those inscriptions and act accordingly, as opposed to others located in a different time or space (the monument as display), or even the gods themselves (the monument as symbol). That is, it makes a difference whether authority was configured through the practice of writing itself, rather than the practice of reading the texts, performing the rituals, or interacting with the inscriptions in other ways. We return again to questions about the materiality of inscriptions: the sensory perception of these objects (in addition—or as opposed—to the text) might be a key part of the religious experience, a powerful reminder of the authority of the gods, a physical symbol of a visit to the sanctuary or participation in a festival. Monumentality, therefore, intersects with questions of authority on multiple different levels. It is sensitivity to the epigraphic habit, the location of writing and reading within a culture that prized orality, and the physical, material, and spatial contexts of inscriptions that allows these questions to be explored.

COMMEMORATION AND DEVOTION

Religious devotion was articulated in a number of ways from dedication to sacrifice, prayer, music, and dance. It is in this sphere, however, where the gap between recorded practice and actual practice is probably the greatest: performance of rites and their commemoration are not the same thing. Inscriptions are not merely snapshots of sacrifices, dedications, or prayers, but a commemoration of specific—and selective—aspects of these practices. This is clearest (and most frequently discussed) with regard to funerary rituals. Inscribed grave stelai do not simply indicate who was deceased, but present them in ways that more often than not highlight—and very often seek to enhance—their social status (Meyer 1993; Tsagalis

2008). These are not clear-cut reproductions of the deceased's place within the world; they are representations of it, with all the selectivity that this implies. In sum, our knowledge of large parts of Greek religion is mediated through commemorative practice (see further, in this volume, Edmonds, Chapter 37, and Voutiras, Chapter 27).

It is, of course, not only funerary rituals where this is the case. Other forms of religious devotion also show the gap between performance of rituals and their commemoration. Inscribed prayers, for example, do not record the actual speaking of a request, but commemorate a particular moment within the communication between human and divine, of which the surviving text is just one part. Prayer is a way of requesting action, part of a process, of which the epigraphic recording of words is just one aspect, and which is completed with the dedication of a votive offering (Depew 1997). The writing down of a prayer is not, however, necessary for its effectiveness; it is a part of the interaction chosen for commemoration, an alternative or an addition to the thank-offering. Likewise, inscribed hymns record selective aspects of religious song: they record the words rather than its music, the movement it inspires, or the aural impact on the audience for whom it is performed. They are inscribed to commemorate the performance of the song at a particular event and provide a focal point for future generations to remember past rituals (Alonge 2008). They are not inscribed as an *aide-memoire* for future performance and should not be treated by historians as such.

Selectivity is, therefore, a key part of commemoration. But so is temporality: commemoration lengthens the temporal impact of a selected aspect of a ritual from a single moment in time and makes it visible across time and space. Viewing inscriptions as commemorative objects therefore raises questions about their potential as sites of cultural memory, and emphasizes that they were often points of interaction between people, objects, and texts, rather than just stones which passively recorded rituals (Connerton 1989). This shifts the focus from the writing of a text to its reception, that is, the inscription's impact, not only within the immediate context of its ritual production, but also how it shaped responses to ritual practice and experience. Here, we see ways in which highly personal forms of religious devotion are cross-cut by, and indeed in themselves shape, structures of authority.

Examination of the personal experience of religious practice is a key development in recent scholarship (Purvis 2003; Instone 2009; Kindt 2012). Epigraphically, this can be investigated in many ways, for example, by examining mark-making in the form of name inscriptions and drawn images. This is an important and ubiquitous form of religious expression, seen most clearly, for example, in the inscribing of Jewish or Christian symbols (Chaniotis 2002). Footprint drawings might be seen in a similar light (and show, incidentally, that epigraphic communication is not always bound up in 'the text'). Although there are a variety of explanations for the appearance of inscribed footprints, it is likely that, in some contexts, they commemorated epiphanies (Kötting 1983; Dunbabin 1990). Direct interaction with the divine through epiphany is an intense and personal experience worthy of recording, but commemoration of it does not always require expression in a literate or textual form (Macdonald 2005; Webster 2008; in general, Harris 1995). It has the potential, however, of having a significant impact on an individual and the community (see, for example, *SIG*^{3} 398, which describes the intervention of Apollo in Kos).

Inscriptions appear not infrequently *on* cult buildings (although often in very specific places), taking the form of prayers, invocations, or names. A number of examples come from Egypt, where Greeks inscribed their names and prayers on religious shrines as a means of demonstrating their presence and piety through pilgrimage (Nachtergael 1999; Rutherford 2003; Mairs 2011), but this is a phenomenon which is visible across the Greek world from Athens to Thasos to Asia Minor (examples are known from Aphrodisias, Lagina, and Sagalassos). In some of these cases (Thasos, Athens, Lagina), the inscriptions form clusters of numerous names, in others only single names are found (Sagalassos). These demonstrate the importance of commemorating presence within a cultic environment; they are a personal manifestation of piety much like the *mnesthe*-formula prayers, which request remembrance of (usually) a named individual to a god (on not reading such texts as vandalism, see Baird and Taylor 2011). These occur commonly in the Greek East, appearing not only in sanctuaries, but also in private homes as well as in public spaces (Rehm 1940; Baird 2011). The expression of religious devotion through writing and mark-making may take different forms in different places at different times, but it clearly permeated a wide variety

of Greek societies and was an important, if overlooked, aspect of religious expression.

Considering aspects of commemorative practice is important if we wish to understand the relationship between the production, maintenance, or reuse of inscriptions (or even their destruction), and their role in, and contribution to our knowledge of, Greek religious practice. The texts recorded by inscriptions are not isolated from the practices, beliefs, or cultural impulses of people in the Greek world and should not be seen as such. It is commemoration, rather than the transmission of knowledge, which underlines the choices made when recording a text on a stone or another object: inscriptions rarely record *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*.

CONNECTIVITY: RELIGION, PEOPLE, AND PLACE

In recent years, historians have stressed the ways in which inscriptions connect people and places together. This is not simply in terms of what the texts say and the mental maps created through the genre(s) they construct, but in terms of where they are set up, their symbolic value, through the process of writing, and the politics of display (Scott 2011; Shear 2011; Taylor 2011; see also, in this volume, Constantakopoulou, Chapter 19). Epigraphic religious practice created and maintained social ties, actively sought to link with the past and mediate the future, and positioned groups (religious and 'secular') with regard to others.

Large numbers of inscriptions take the form of lists, which demonstrate some of these themes. Lists record financial contributions of worshippers at sanctuaries (Migeotte 1992), temple accounts and inventories (Davies 2001), names of priests (Fraser 1953), or membership of religious communities (Arnaoutoglou 2003). As such, they detail the diversity of personnel involved in Greek cults as participants, contributors, and officials. In some cases, these involve financial transactions between, or donations from, members of the local community to a cult. At the sanctuary of Athana Lindia in Lindos, an inscription recording those who

contributed to the restoration of cultic objects (decoration for the cult statue, receptacles used in ritual) was erected in the last quarter of the fourth century BCE (*IG* XII, 1 764 = *Lindos* II 51; Migeotte 1992: no. 39). This is a long document: displayed on both sides of a large *stele* are the names of over 250 (perhaps as many as 300) donors, arranged according to locality (that is, by deme), including some women and children. No financial information about the donation is given here, but lists such as these frequently reveal this information and so indicate the mechanisms behind the economics of cult: often they detail how much each person has donated to the upkeep of the sanctuary or festival (see, for example, *IG* XII, 9 1189, in which contributions range from 10 to 700 drachmas for the restoration of the sanctuary of Artemis Proseoa in Histiaia at the end of the second century BCE; Migeotte 1992: 191–4).

The fact that specific financial information is not recorded here might indicate that equal contributions were made by all the participants, or perhaps that donations took the form of objects (vases and decorations) rather than money. However, the fact that these details are not specified also serves to divert attention from the transactions themselves and focuses it instead on those who made the contributions. In this way it foreshadows the Lindian Chronicle, an inscription set up in the same sanctuary 200 years later, written as an historical inventory of dedications (Higbie 2003). As Scott has pointed out, the dedications recorded here no longer existed by the time the inscription was made; the inscription constructs a version of the Lindian past in which dedication to the sanctuary located Lindos within historical networks of power and in which 'the people are more important than the things' (Scott 2011: 246).

In a similar way, our list (*Lindos* II 51) emphasizes the people contributing to the sanctuary and their relationships to one another rather than the financial value of their contributions. The large number of families recorded here (fathers and sons, brothers, wives, children) roots participation in cult within membership of the community and stresses the importance of family ties within this context (sometimes brothers even contribute together). The inscription therefore not only honours the contributors for their donations, providing encouragement for the future, but, at the same time, embeds (at least this) cult activity within the family and the deme. Visitors to the sanctuary would have clearly seen a family's

piety through this inscription. It is families and local communities that provide the structure for participation in religious activity here.

Lists like these, therefore, raise questions about display, and where to locate that display in various networks (temporal, historical, communal, etc.). They also highlight the community relationships that lay behind, indeed shaped, religious experience. As objects they form visual connections with other inscriptions at the sanctuary, commemorating the contributions made to the cult and providing an honorific environment for those to be remembered. Not only do lists like these preserve information for the future, but they also present a version of past Lindian society to which local families can easily link themselves by recognizing their ancestors' contributions. Inclusion on such lists is also a way to demonstrate belonging, to highlight social bonds within a community, or perhaps exclude groups from it: *Lindos* II 51 does not include foreigners amongst the donors, and there is a high correlation between the demes of these contributors and those within Rhodes which were politically powerful (Bresson 1988). As such, epigraphic evidence like this shows how religious practice both created and defined communities, reinforced local hierarchies, and provided a forum for negotiating social networks and social status.

CONCLUSION

Albert Henrichs describes 'the bulk of religious inscriptions . . . [as] centrifugal . . . in that they reach beyond the ritual realm into adjacent areas of polis life, or because they deal with aspects of Greek religion which are peripheral, marginal or highly personal' (Henrichs 2003: 44). Whilst there are certainly inscriptions that fit this description, perhaps it is necessary to redefine what is considered 'central' about Greek religion according to the epigraphic evidence *tout court* rather than according to the disembodied texts they convey. Our knowledge of the 'epigraphic habit', and the questions this raises about monumentality, commemoration, and display, as well as temporal, spatial, and social connectivity, allows us to investigate this diverse material from a variety

of angles. The diversity of epigraphic evidence mirrors the diversity of practice of religion in the Greek world, but it also reflects the diversity of personnel involved. It is no surprise, then, that there are many different ways to analyse this material, but, at the very minimum, it is necessary to interrogate epigraphic evidence both as historical writing in its own right and as objects that have material properties. Inscriptions do not uncomplicatedly record 'what happened' in Greek cults, but they certainly provide a wealth of information about a variety of aspects of Greek religion if we ask the right questions of them.

Suggested Reading

The annual publication of the *Epigraphic Bulletin for Greek Religion* (*EBGR*) in the journal *Kernos* is indispensable, as is the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (*SEG*, now available online). Epigraphic handbooks, such as John Bodel's *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions* or A. G. Woodhead's *The Study of Greek Inscriptions*, give general advice on how to access, use, and interpret inscriptions. B. H. McLean's *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* contains useful discussions of 'religious' inscriptions with many examples, as does M. Guarducci's *L'epigrafia greca dalle arigini al tardo impero* (in Italian), and archaeological site reports often include a volume (or volumes) on inscriptions (for example, the *Inscriptions de Délos*). Collections of texts, such as Sokolowski's *Lois sacrées des cités grecque* and *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure* are so frequently referred to that they have their own abbreviations: *LSCG*, *LSAM* (expanded and updated by Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law*, abbreviated as *NGSL*^{2}). There are numerous inscriptions concerned with religious matters to be found in volumes such as Meiggs and Lewis (ML) or Rhodes and Osborne (RO).

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CHAPTER 9

MATERIAL EVIDENCE

CAITLÍN E. BARRETT

INTRODUCTION

A rich material record and fine-grained chronology make the ancient Mediterranean a particularly productive setting for the archaeology of religion. Although synthetic studies of Greek religion have historically been largely text-based, newer studies increasingly embrace a more integrated approach, engaging material evidence seriously (cf. Kindt 2011, 2012). The study of material evidence for Greek religion appears to presuppose some consensus on the understanding of at least three terms: 'Greek', 'religion', and 'material evidence'. However, as this chapter and this volume, Chapters 1–4, demonstrate, all of those terms become increasingly slippery on closer investigation.

The archaeology of Greek religion is so wide-ranging that it is difficult to isolate one set of dominant trends, and any two scholars might make different selections (cf. the 'areas of current debate' in Kindt 2011: 701–5). The following discussion emphasizes contemporary developments in the archaeology of Greek religion that echo certain themes in the present volume: (1) reassessing received definitions of 'Greek religion'; (2)

adopting a broader chronological perspective, including the Hellenistic period; and (3) re-evaluating the 'polis religion' model (as formulated by Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a, 2000b).

The identification of material culture as 'religious'—and, if religious, as evidence for specifically *Greek* religion—is often contentious. Much recent literature addresses the archaeological identification of religious sites and ritual activity, while also reconsidering the complicated relationship of 'ritual' to 'religion' (see the section 'The Archaeology of Religion: History and Theory' for references). Additionally, another area of burgeoning research—the study of continuity and transformation in Hellenistic religion—illustrates the complexity inherent in describing religious practices as 'Greek'. Throughout the eastern Mediterranean and beyond, Greco-Macedonian dynasties came to rule foreign populations, reshaping not only the borders of the Greek world but also the nature of 'Greek' religion. As far afield as Sudan and Afghanistan, Greeks and 'others' employed Hellenizing religious artefacts and architecture (Burstein 1993; Mairs 2007, forthcoming; Török 2011), and people who considered themselves 'Hellenes' engaged with a diverse array of foreign religious traditions, from Egyptian and Near Eastern cults to Buddhism (e.g. Scott 1985; Barrett 2011; Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011: 26–33, 211–17). Such developments problematize the concept of 'Greek' religion, requiring critical analysis of the phenomenon of 'syncretism' (Shaw and Stewart 1994; Clack 2011) and the relationship of religion to cultural and ethnic identities.

Additionally, archaeological interrogations of the nature and boundaries of ancient Greek religion complement recent reassessments of the 'polis model' of cult (on which, see Kindt 2009; Rives 2010: 268–76; Eidinow 2011; Kindt 2012). Material evidence for household and/or personal rituals, such as domestic cult or magical rites, demonstrates the complexity of cultic relationships between individual, household, and polis; and the Hellenistic period saw civic cult adapt to new socio-political contexts, as many poleis surrendered their autonomy to kings.

Beyond these developments, others might be noted. Numerous studies integrate material and textual data to reconsider specific aspects of Greek religion. For example, divine images' nature and functions continue to undergo much scrutiny (e.g. Platt 2011; Gaifman 2012), as does the interrelationship of magic and religion (a topic whose full bibliography is

too extensive to cite here, but note the appearance of four major new books within the past decade: Eidinow 2007; Collins 2008; Kindt 2012: 90–122; Wilburn 2012). Similarly, broadening traditional images of Greek religion is a growing focus on sacred space beyond the sanctuary, from household cult to sacral landscapes (see 'Contextualizing Sacred Space: Mapping, Remote Sensing, and Landscape-Based Approaches').

Material culture provides rich evidence on these and many other topics in Greek religion, but to make sense of that evidence, interpretation remains necessary at every stage of the archaeological process. Accordingly, this chapter not only surveys developments in the field, but also examines some methodological and theoretical challenges in interpreting material culture. Illustrating some of these challenges are two case studies focusing on the contextual analysis of terracotta figurines: one from a sanctuary on Hellenistic Delos, and one from a refuse deposit in Classical Athens. These case studies also illustrate some benefits that arise from reconsidering the category of 'Greek religion', especially through more thorough incorporation of Hellenistic data, re-evaluation of the 'polis model', and contextualization of ritual actions within specific religious settings.

MATERIALS AND DATA

In addition to rich textual data (this volume, Chapters 6–8), ancient Greek religion boasts a material record incorporating (*inter alia*) religious sites, artefacts, iconography, regional survey data, and ancient botanical, faunal, and human remains. However, the relationship of this data to ancient religious practices and beliefs is frequently less than straightforward. Religious sites range from the relatively obvious (e.g. sanctuaries with monumental temples, see, in this volume, Scott, Chapter 16) to the archaeologically near-invisible (e.g. sacred groves with few or no built structures: Birge 1982, 1992: 85–99; Conan 2007). While regional surveys help counteract scholarly biases towards large, visible temple sites (see 'Contextualizing Sacred Space: Mapping, Remote Sensing, and Landscape-Based Approaches'), some types of ancient sacred space

remain archaeologically undetectable. For example, many household rituals probably occurred in multifunctional settings where they would leave few archaeological traces (cf. Jameson 1990a: 104–6, 1990b: 192–5). The supposed centre of domestic ritual, the hearth, is often difficult to locate archaeologically, and may frequently have consisted of little more than a portable brazier (Jameson 1990a: 105–6, 1990b: 193; Tsakirgis 2007: 230).

The use of artefacts or ecofacts as evidence for ancient religion requires similar unpacking. Objects that functioned primarily as religious implements—say, the *sistra* (sacred rattling instruments) used in Hellenistic/Roman adaptations of the Isis cult—may be readily identifiable. However, many objects could function in both religious and practical contexts; for example, a craftsman might dedicate his tools at a temple, transforming them into votives (Van Straten 1981: 92–6). In such situations, archaeological context is essential to interpretation. Accordingly, the material evidence for ancient Greek religion is rich, but not transparent. Interpretation is necessary at every stage of the archaeological process, requiring careful grounding in archaeological theory and methodology.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF RELIGION: HISTORY AND THEORY

Awareness of archaeological theory can help scholars become conscious of their own interpretive biases, an important consideration when studying religious practices in cultures distant from one's own. This section, therefore, surveys several major theoretical developments in the twentieth-century and twenty-first-century archaeology of religion, with special attention to their applications in Classical archaeology.

At its origins, Classical archaeology focused less on theory and methodology than on acquiring beautiful objects. Elite Renaissance collectors adorned their homes with ancient artworks, and, by the eighteenth century, interest in ancient art inspired excavation at sites like

Pompeii and Herculaneum. The nineteenth/early twentieth centuries saw the development of modern archaeological field techniques, including the stratigraphic method of excavation, some of whose pioneers in Classical archaeology included Giuseppe Fiorelli at Pompeii and Heinrich Schliemann at Troy.

In the 1960/1970s, many scholars advocated for a so-called 'New Archaeology'. This 'processualist' movement positioned archaeology as an anthropological science, testing hypotheses through deductive reasoning to discover 'laws' of human behaviour (Binford 1962, 1972: 84, 89–100; Watson, LeBlanc, and Redman 1971; Watson 1976). This movement encouraged certain methodological advances but fostered relatively little research on ancient religion; many processualists focused on cultures' ecologically adaptive aspects, downplaying religion's active ability to shape society (see critique in Insoll 2004a: 46–51).

In the 1980/1990s, a generation of 'post-processual' archaeologists critiqued the processualist project. Many post-processualists viewed archaeology as a social science or art (Dark 1995: 19–24), conceptualizing material culture as a 'text' to interpret (Hodder 1992; Hodder and Hutson 2003). This 'humanistic' orientation facilitated more work on ancient symbolism, ideology, and religion (Preucel and Hodder 1996: 299–412). However, some post-processualists' scepticism of the possibility of obtaining objective truth about the past made it harder to formulate rigorous methodologies for empirical study (see critiques in Kohl 1993: 16; Renfrew 1994b: 3–5).

The processualist movement and post-processualist critique originated largely in New World and prehistoric archaeology, but many Classical archaeologists came to engage with research questions and methodologies associated with these movements (see recent overviews in Whitley 2001: 12–16, 42–59; Kindt 2011: 699–700). One of the most important recent movements in the archaeology of ritual and religion developed partly from an Aegeanist's response to the processualist/post-processualist debate. Colin Renfrew's excavations at a Bronze Age Cycladic shrine inspired his influential attempt to systematize the archaeological identification of ritual sites (1985, 1994a, 2007; Renfrew and Bahn 1991: 408–9), contributing to the development of the 'cognitive archaeology' or 'cognitive-processual' movement (Renfrew 1985, 1994a; Renfrew and Zubrow 1994; Flannery and Marcus 1996). Seeking to articulate

methodologically rigorous ways to study the 'ancient mind', cognitive archaeology addresses topics often absent from processual archaeology, but maintains a realist philosophical stance (Renfrew 1994b: 4, 10).

The past two decades have witnessed a great proliferation of scholarship on the archaeology of ritual both within and beyond the Mediterranean, much of it engaging directly or indirectly with Renfrew's work (see Insoll 2011, with extensive bibliography; and now Wesler 2012). The checklist format of Renfrew's method for identifying religious sites has attracted some critique (Insoll 2004a: 96–7; Kindt 2011: 699). Additionally, as Renfrew himself notes (1985: 22), his guidelines are better suited to sanctuary than domestic cult; they emphasize sites and rituals clearly separated from everyday routine (as critiqued in Insoll 2004a: 97; Fogelin 2007: 59–61). In contrast, Insoll (2004a, 2004b) argues for the embeddedness of religion within daily life—a perspective we might consider particularly appropriate with regard to the Greek experience, given the absence of any ancient Greek term corresponding in all particulars to 'religion'. Much recent research also builds on Renfrew's work by further exploring the complex relationships between 'ritual' and 'religion': as many scholars note, not all rituals need be religious (e.g. Kyriakidis 2007; Verhoeven 2011; Elsner 2012), and rituals should be understood in the context of a broader spectrum of 'ritualizations' (Bell 1992, 1997). The material record of Greek religion provides a rich data set for testing different theoretical perspectives (cf. Renfrew 1980: 296–7; Snodgrass 1987: 3) and developing new approaches. Classical archaeologists thus have much to offer, not only to the study of Greek religion, but to archaeology as a discipline.

METHODOLOGIES

Just as the theoretical frameworks we bring to the data will shape our interpretations of ancient Greek religion, so will our choice of methodological tools influence the types of data available to us. The past few decades have seen significant expansion and refinement of methodologies for survey, remote sensing, excavation, and object analysis.

Within the vast topic of archaeological methodologies for the study of Greek religion, the following discussion will concentrate on three themes: (1) mapping and landscape-based approaches to sacred space; (2) object-based approaches to ancient ritual actions; and (3) the importance of archaeological context. At any religious site, archaeologists' methodological choices will profoundly shape the amount, nature, and quality of the resulting data, with important implications for those data's use as evidence for ancient cult.

Contextualizing Sacred Space: Mapping, Remote Sensing, and Landscape-Based Approaches

Popular perceptions of archaeology often emphasize excavation, but archaeologists also examine the ancient landscape through less invasive means. Landscape-based and mapping-based approaches generate data on patterns of spatial use, both at the level of the individual religious site and the broader level of the sacral landscape. A range of tools provide data on the organization of sacred space (within the sanctuary and beyond) and help situate individual religious sites within broader spatial and temporal frameworks.

Remote sensing can detect buried features without excavation, providing a broad picture of sites' layout and history. Such techniques have been productive at numerous ancient Mediterranean religious sites. Magnetometry, for example, can reveal plans of sanctuaries and burial complexes (e.g. Aspinall, Gaffney, and Schmidt 2008: 162–5; Herbich 2009). Other useful remote sensing methods include resistivity survey, ground-penetrating radar (Gaffney and Gater 2003), aerial photography, and satellite data (Parcak 2009).

The broad geographical scope of another technique, surface survey, helps contextualize individual sanctuaries within larger landscapes. For ancient Greek religion, surface survey has revealed regional and chronological changes in patterns of sanctuary use (Alcock 1994; Kindt 2011: 698) and uncovered small rural sanctuaries, traditionally underrepresented in scholarly literature (Catling 1990; Alcock 1994: 254).

Geological surveys provide another type of data on ancient religious landscapes, helping situate sanctuaries within their physical environment. For example, at Delphi, geological evidence has fuelled debates on the existence of psychoactive subterranean gases, a controversy with implications for the functioning of the Delphic oracle (Lehoux 2007; Piccardi, Monti, Vasselli, Tassi, Gaki-Papanastassiou, and Papanastassiou 2008).

Finally, a valuable opportunity for relating sacred sites to broader sacral landscapes comes from software for integrating, visualizing, and analysing data from survey, remote sensing, and excavation. Geographic information systems (GIS) provides a powerful tool for spatial analysis, enabling archaeologists not only to map sites, but to generate and test hypotheses about the ancient landscape (e.g. Wheatley and Gillings 2002; Conolly and Lake 2006). Another potentially helpful tool is 3-D modelling, recently employed for the Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace to investigate the effects of architecture and topography on initiates' experiences (Wescoat, Thayer, and Harrington forthcoming).

From Objects to Rituals

Another type of data, suited to a different range of research questions, comes from studying individual objects. While the artefacts that best captured early researchers' attention were often beautiful or monumental, modern archaeology places equal weight on unimposing objects like pottery sherds or animal bones. The resulting broader range of available data helps provide a more comprehensive picture of Greek ritual behaviours.

A variety of evidence may help us associate individual artefacts or ecofacts with ancient religious practices. An object's archaeological context may suggest religious functions; for example, botanical remains from the Samian Heraion were probably floral offerings (Kucan 2000: 105). Textual or iconographic evidence may indicate certain objects' use during religious rituals, as with artistic depictions of figures pouring libations from *phialai*. Alternatively, the iconography on an object itself may portray ritual activities, as with terracotta figurines depicting festival processions (for which, see Ballet 2000: 99–100).

Archaeometry and archaeological science can also help connect artefacts and ecofacts to ancient rituals. For example, faunal analysis of sacrificial and feasting remains may inform about the origins and practice of Greek animal sacrifice (Hamilakis and Konsolaki 2004; Naiden 2012: 57–63; cf. Insoll 2004a: 71–6; see also, in this volume, Naiden, Chapter 31). Archaeobotany can reveal plant offerings at religious sites (Tipping 1994; Kucan 2000: 105) or investigate the origins of unprovenanced objects of cult (Chester 2009). Residue analysis of ritual vessels may expose substances used in divine offerings, consumed in feasts, or deposited as grave goods (Hodos 2006: 117; Osborne 2007: 88; Tzedakis, Martlew, and Jones 2008). Archaeometric approaches like archaeometallurgy and ceramic petrography (among others) provide further data on ritual objects' production, distribution, and consumption, helping situate rites within broader economic and social frameworks.

Archaeological Context

Finally, an understanding of archaeological context is essential to connecting physical remains to religious activities. Archaeological context has three major components: matrix (the sediment around an object), provenience (the object's location in three-dimensional space), and association (the object's spatial relationship to other artefacts, features, and ecofacts). Archaeologists must further determine whether artefacts come from primary or secondary contexts, and what natural and cultural formation processes shaped those deposits (Schiffer 1987). *In situ* deposits, or *de facto* assemblages, were left behind when people abandoned an activity area (Schiffer 1987: 89–97; Ault and Nevett 1999). More common are refuse deposits, which Schiffer (1972: 161, 1987: 58) divides into primary refuse (deposited at the location of use) and secondary refuse (deposited elsewhere). Stripped of archaeological context, ritual objects may retain their aesthetic qualities, but we cannot know how people actually used them. Looting and undocumented digging irretrievably deprive artefacts of their human connection; that is, the contextual data associating objects with people.

CASE STUDIES IN CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

As case studies in contextual analysis, let us examine two terracotta figurines from very different contexts: one from a discard context in the Classical Athenian *agora*, and one from the Samothrakeion on Hellenistic Delos. The following discussion uses these figurines to illustrate several themes emphasized earlier: (1) the reassessment of received definitions of 'religion' in general, and 'Greek religion' in particular; (2) the value of a broader chronological perspective on Greek religion, including the Hellenistic period; and (3) the ongoing reassessment of the 'polis model' of Greek religion. The examination of these figurines also illustrates several theoretical and methodological points, including the importance of contextual analysis, the informational value of seemingly minor 'small finds', and the necessity of situating individual religious locations within broader landscapes.

Description of the Objects

The first figurine to be examined (Figure 9.1) comes from a fifth/fourth century BCE discard context in the Athenian *agora* (inventory nr. *Agora* T4128; previously published in Nicholls 1995: no. 51, pl. 106). *Agora* T4128 preserves the upper portion of a hollow, double-moulded terracotta figurine (height: 64.0 mm). The fragment shows the head and chest of a round-faced, seemingly nude, female with large, exaggerated facial features, wearing a floral wreath. Her pose is that of a reclining banqueter; the angles of head, neck, and shoulder suggest a reclining posture, and a slight protrusion below the breasts may represent an object (cup?) in the left hand. Her hair's shortness suggests slavery. Knife-scraped vertical striations on her neck evoke age. The fabric is fine and brown, with occasional sand inclusions. The top of a rectangular vent appears on the roughly modelled back side, which preserves a speck of pink paint; traces of white undercoating survive on front and back.

FIGURE 9.1 Fragment of a terracotta figurine of a reclining female, from a well in the Athenian *Agora*, fifth/fourth cent. BCE (Athenian *Agora* T4128). Photograph: C. E. Barrett.

Nicholls (1995: 439–41) identifies this figurine as an aged *hetaira* (courtesan), possibly a character from theatrical performances. Vases depict *hetairai* reclining at banquets (Kurke 1997: 135–7), and some

Classical and Hellenistic terracottas portray *hetairai*, masks of *hetairai*, or actors dressed as *hetairai* (e.g. Hart 2010, nos 62, 66, 89, 90; Jeammet 2010: no. 119).

The second figurine (Figure 9.2) comes from the second/first century BCE Samothrakeion on Delos. This object (Delos Museum inventory no. A1758) represents the head of a hollow, double-moulded male figurine (published most recently in Barrett 2011: 279–84, 385–91, 471). The head (height: 46.6 mm) is round and bald, with creased, furrowed brow, large mouth, and flat, broad nose. Atop his head are two lotus buds, common on Egyptian figurines of child-gods such as Harpokrates. The mouth is partially open, and a preserved neck fragment suggests a tilted head; parallels suggest the figure may be dancing or singing (Barrett 2011: 247, 260–1). The semi-fine/coarse brown fabric is consistent with an Egyptian 'Nile silt', possibly limestone-tempered (Barrett 2011: 83–7). Traces of white coating are visible. This terracotta also has close iconographic parallels in Greco-Roman Egypt, where such figurines appear to represent indigenous deities and/or priests. The bald head and furrowed brow evoke the features of the so-called 'Pataikos', a dwarf form of the Memphite creator-god Ptah, and the lotus buds suggest Ptah–Pataikos' occasional syncretism with Harpokrates. Similar facial features and lotus buds also characterize Egyptian figurines of cult officiants dancing or carrying divine statues (Barrett 2011: 260, 270–84).

FIGURE 9.2 Head of a terracotta figurine of a bald male crowned with two lotus buds, from the Samothrakeion on Delos, second/first cent. BCE (Delos Museum A1758). Photograph C. E. Barrett. Copyright Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Culture and Sports, General Directorate of Antiquities and Culture Heritage/Twenty-First Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities.

(For permission to examine the two figurines discussed in this article, I thank John Camp (Athenian Agora); Panagiotis Hatzidakis (Delos Museum); and Dominique Mulliez (École Française d'Athènes). I also thank Véronique Chankowski and Catherine Pottet-De Boel for access to the ÉfA archives.)

Context: Linking Artefacts to Religious Practice

Both figurines can serve as test cases for the archaeological identification of evidence for 'Greek religion'. How do we identify an artefact as 'religious'? Are either or both of these figurines 'religious' objects? If so, how and why—and to what degree is that religion 'Greek'? Archaeological context provides a necessary link between artefact and practice, enabling us to link one figurine to religious practices while suggesting that the second may never actually have seen ritual use. Yet, even for the figurine demonstrably used in a religious context, questions remain: In what ways is that religion 'Greek', and what are the cultural boundaries of 'Greek' religion?

Although scholars often associate terracotta figurines with popular cult, iconography alone provides little solid evidence connecting either figurine to Greek religious *practice*. The Athenian figurine's sympotic and possible theatrical associations could be take to evoke a Dionysiac sphere, while the Delian figurine's imagery recalls Egyptian deities and priests. However, consumers might have valued such objects for many possible reasons. To investigate their uses—including any role in actual religious practice—we need to move from iconography to archaeological context.

In only one case—the Delian figurine—does archaeological context suggest actual cultic use. Despite its Egyptian manufacture, this object derives from the Samothrakeion on Hellenistic Delos. Site reports and field notes suggest the figurine was *in situ* (Chapouthier 1935: 87; Barrett 2011: 386–7) and probably served as a votive offering (cf., on votive figurines, Alroth 1988).

The Athenian figurine, in contrast, comes from a disposal context: a well in the *agora* (Shear 1975: 359; Nicholls 1995). The well's upper fill contained a large deposit of coroplastic material: at least 21 figurines, 1 archetype, and at least 40 terracotta moulds (Nicholls 1995: 405), all displaying a wide range of iconographic types (Nicholls 1995: 413, 476–84). The presence of production materials (moulds, archetype) and discards (unfinished, damaged pieces) suggests workshop debris, and many moulds share distinctive technical features indicative of a single workshop (Nicholls 1995: 409, 412, 482). Accordingly, this deposit probably contains a coroplastic workshop's debris.

The analysis of such debris provides much evidence on figurine production, but less on consumption or use. The figurines in this deposit never reached consumers; they were discarded after production, perhaps because of manufacturing flaws, or a lack of buyers, or the workshop going out of business. Had it found a consumer, this figurine might well have wound up in a range of possible religious contexts; figurines with similar iconography appear at sanctuary sites (e.g. Eleusis: Nicholls 1995: 439 n. 162) or in graves (Hart 2010: no. 62). However, other functions are also possible, and different potential buyers might have made different choices for the object's use.

In contrast, the Delian figurine clearly derives from a religious use-context—but here we encounter complications concerning that context's supposed 'Greekness'. The figurine comes from a sanctuary in the heart of the Cyclades, on an island sacred to Apollo; but, by Hellenistic times, that island also had a large foreign population and an extremely cosmopolitan, international cultural milieu. The sanctuary in question served deities long worshipped by Greeks, but possibly of non-Greek origins. Worshippers at the Delian Samothrakeion seemingly identified the Samothracian Megaloi Theoi with the Kabeiroi, an identification attested to elsewhere in antiquity (Bruneau 1970: 379–90, 395; Cole 1984: 78–9; Barrett 2011: n. 1583)—but the origins of both Samothracian gods and Kabeiroi remain disputed, with non-Greek origins sometimes suggested for both (Hdt. 2.51; Diod. Sic. 5.47.2–3; Cole 1984: 10; Barrett 2011: n. 1601). Complicating matters further, the figurine itself appears thoroughly Egyptian in iconography and manufacture. In what respects, then, does this artefact attest to a specifically 'Greek' religion?

Other artefacts associated with A1758 similarly problematize the borders of 'Greek religion'. Another terracotta figurine from the Samothrakeion also draws on Egyptian religious iconography, representing the Egyptian dwarf-god Bes (Barrett 2011: 275–8). Two additional figurines—a hunchbacked, possibly dwarfish figure and a dog wearing a *bulla*—may also evoke parallels from Greco-Roman Egypt (Barrett 2011: 384–6), where their imagery could suggest a range of possible associations, from religious ritual to daily life (see, e.g. Boutantin 2014: 217–35 on the multivalent iconography of dog figurines). Unlike the imported A1758, however, all three of these figurines have local clay fabrics (Barrett 2011: 81), suggesting they were produced on Delos itself.

Furthermore, they share the sanctuary with a range of figurines whose iconography is much more traditionally 'Greek', including images of Aphrodite, herms, a lion, horses, and various human figures without divine attributes (Chapouthier 1935: 87; Laumonier 1956: 15).

Indeed, A1758's dedication at a Delian sanctuary of the Megaloi Theoi/Kabeiroi may suggest conscious negotiation between originally distinct religious traditions. Much remains unknown about the mystery cults of the Samothracian gods and Kabeiroi, but the Kabeiroi appear sometimes to be portrayed as dwarfs or pygmies (Burkert 1985 [1977]: 282; Daumas 1998; Schachter 2003: 130–1; Bowden 2010: 59–61). At least two dedications at the Samothrakeion—A1758 and the Bes figurine—represent Egyptian dwarfs or dwarf-gods. Although Hellenistic audiences valued images of dwarfs for various reasons, the sanctuary context here suggests more specific readings. In dedicating such images at this sanctuary, worshippers may, like Herodotos (3.37), have constructed parallels between Egyptian dwarf-deities and the Kabeiroi (Barrett 2011: 388–91). The sanctuary's Delian location enhances the likelihood that the dedicator recognized the figurines' Egyptian resonances; a major trading hub, Hellenistic Delos hosted some expatriate Egyptians and flourishing cults of Isis and Sarapis (Barrett 2011: 119–20).

Many questions remain. Did a single worshipper dedicate multiple figurines with Egyptian associations, or do they represent multiple dedications? Also unknown is the donor(s)' cultural affiliation. Was A1758's dedicator an Egyptian expatriate, or a member of some other segment of Delos' diverse population? Greeks, Italians, Phoenicians, Syrians, Egyptians, and Arabs were all present on the island (Bruneau 1972: 115–16; Baslez 1977; Barrett 2011: 119), and adherents of Egyptian cults on Delos had similar far-flung origins (Roussel 1916: 266–7, 280–4; Baslez 1977: 35–65; Barrett 2011: 321–420). The port's international, multi-ethnic setting may have provided particular motivation for residents to explore the compatibility of originally disparate religious practices.

Ultimately, the Samothrakeion figurine raises as many questions as it answers about the boundaries of 'Greek religion'. In place of neatly delineated categories for 'Greek' and 'other' religious traditions, this artefact points to an ongoing process of negotiation, in which ritual activity in sacred space enabled individuals to create, break down, and reshape cultural and religious identities.

Tradition and Transformation in Greek Religion

A comparison of the fifth/fourth-century BCE Athenian and second/first-century BCE Delian figurines also illustrates certain continuities and discontinuities between Classical and Hellenistic religious practices. Certainly, the Delian figurine testifies to the altered socio-political context of the Hellenistic world, with its increased international connectivity and religious cosmopolitanism. Additionally, the Samothrakeion find-spot recalls the Hellenistic expansion of mystery cults like that of the Megaloi Theoi (Lawall 2003; Barrett 2011: n. 1582; Wescoat 2012).

However, other aspects of these artefacts evoke continuity from Classical to Hellenistic times. The use of mould-made terracotta figurines, in a variety of contexts, characterizes both Classical and Hellenistic sites. Despite the Delian figurine's foreign fabric and iconography, its producers employed manufacturing techniques that originated in Greece (Uhlenbrock 1990: 16–17; Muller 1996: 28–47) and were, in large part, already familiar to the producers of the earlier Athenian figurine. Furthermore, figurines similar to the Athenian T4128 survived into the Hellenistic period, when terracottas of reclining female banqueters appear as far afield as Seleukid Babylon (Langin-Hooper 2007: 152–3). Even in changing cultural settings, the continuing ubiquity of mass-produced figurines suggests some perceived continuity in popular needs.

Re-Evaluating the 'Polis Model'

Finally, these figurines also illustrate some issues with the 'polis model' of Greek religion. The Samothrakeion figurine's international associations emphasize identities larger in scope than polis citizenship. Rather than reaffirming a specific polis' institutions or prestige, this object's donor signalled membership in broader religious and cultural networks—a potentially useful choice for someone at an international trading port. In contrast, the Classical figurine's iconography shows little foreign influence, and it comes from a polis—Athens—that, even in Hellenistic times, remained religiously traditional in many ways (Mikalson 1998); Hellenistic figurines from Athens (e.g. Thompson and Thompson 1987) display significantly less foreign iconographic influence than their Delian

counterparts. Yet, even in Classical Athens, the popularity of mass-produced terracottas, designed for individual consumption and use, may speak to practices not fully encompassed within the 'polis model'. Certainly, structural parallels existed between civic cult and some aspects of household cult (Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992: 80–91; Boedeker 2008; Faraone 2008), and similar terracotta types might appear in both households and sanctuaries (cf. Barrett 2011). However, terracottas' broad accessibility, inexpensive materials, and wide array of iconographic types enabled much individual choice in their purchasing and use. Such circumstances problematize assumptions that the polis necessarily acted as primary mediator of citizens' religious experience.

CONCLUSION

The figurines in our case studies thus illustrate several themes central to this volume's re-examination of ancient Greek religion. For one thing, they demonstrate the challenges of *defining borders* for 'Greek religion'. Additionally, a comparison of these figurines illustrates both *continuity and transformation* between Classical and Hellenistic times, as Hellenistic Greeks perpetuated many Classical practices—including the use of mass-produced figurines—while adapting those traditions to the changing religious needs of a socially and politically shifting world. Finally, these popularly accessible objects contribute to a *reassessment of the 'polis model'* of Greek religion, testifying to the interactions of civic cults with other forms of religious practice.

These artefacts' examination also illustrates several theoretical and methodological points, particularly the indispensability of *contextual analysis*. Both objects come from known contexts, but a figurine *in situ* in a sanctuary can provide very different information about religious practices than a figurine from a disposal context. Furthermore, these artefacts also illustrate the *informational value of seemingly humble 'small finds'*. The terracottas' inexpensiveness and accessibility make them particularly useful as evidence of popular practices, as such objects were available to many social strata. Finally, these artefacts illustrate the

importance of *situating individual religious sites within broader landscapes*. Simply associating an artefact with a particular sanctuary may not always be sufficient; we also need to understand that sanctuary's role within a larger network of religious sites, local, regional, and international. So, to understand why someone might dedicate an Egyptian figurine at the Delian Samothrakeion, we need to examine not only the Samothrakeion but also the broader religious and social landscapes of Hellenistic Delos; just as the island provided a commercial meeting point for much of the eastern Mediterranean, so too could worshippers enact a similar cosmopolitanism in Delian sanctuaries.

As the study of Greek religion moves on to new questions and new approaches, the rich material record will remain central to such investigations. Classical archaeologists are increasingly engaging with theories and methods from other disciplines, including anthropology, art history, religious studies, philosophy, archaeometry, and the study of cultures adjacent to the Classical world: Egyptology, Assyriology, Indology, Meroitic studies, and more. The twenty-first-century archaeology of Greek religion is thus a truly multidisciplinary field, contributing to wide-ranging academic discourses while continuing to uncover new material evidence for ancient Greek religion.

Suggested Reading

Within the vast literature on the archaeology of religion and ritual, two helpful starting points for further reading include the *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion* (Insoll 2011) and the essays in Kyriakidis' (2007) recent edited volume, which offers a multidisciplinary perspective and an overview of current debates. Renfrew's (Renfrew 1985; Renfrew and Zubrow 1994) work on ritual sites and 'cognitive archaeology' remains essential reading, and Bell's (1992, 1997) studies of ritual and ritualizations have influenced many archaeologists. A useful introductory text on contemporary archaeological theory is Hodder and Hutson 2003. Trigger 2007 is the standard history of archaeology as a discipline. On the history of Greek archaeology in particular, see Morris 1994, Whitley 2001, Dyson 2006, and Osborne and Alcock 2012.

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CHAPTER 10

PAPYROLOGY

DAVID MARTINEZ

THE central concern of Greek papyrology is editing, interpreting, and publishing papyrus texts, some literary, but others of a documentary nature, which concern the public institutions and private affairs of Greco-Roman society as it developed in Egypt from 332 BCE (Alexander's taking control of Egypt) to CE 641 (Arab conquest). A third category, sub-literary, falls between those two broad types, comprising materials such as popular songs and hymns, school exercises, and magical texts. The following chapter explores some contributions of papyri to the study of Greek religion under three headings: documentary texts, Orphic materials, and, more extensively, the Greek magical papyri.

INTRODUCTION

When Greek colonists streamed into Egypt in the wake of Alexander's conquest, the gods, religious traditions, and beliefs that they brought with them made little initial impact on the native population; the weight of

influence rather moved in the other direction (Youtie 1955: 361 = 1973: 1.549). The numerous local Egyptian deities and their cults, grounded in the vivid and potent institutions of the temples throughout the country, held considerable allure for the new settlers. In fact, long before the Hellenistic period Greeks esteemed the antiquity and authority of Egypt in things religious (Henrichs 2003: 224–7); Herodotos' contention that the Egyptians invented the gods' names (2.50) is well known. Just as striking is one of the earliest Greek papyri, the 'Curse of Artemisia' (fourth cent. BCE), probably originating in the ancient Greek community of the Hellenomemphites (Thompson 2012: 89–90), which invokes the Egyptian god Oserapis and was deposited in his temple in Memphis (Bell 1953: 3–4). That same deity, merged with Zeus and Pluto, later becomes enshrined in the Ptolemaic Serapis cult (see also, in this volume, Kleibl, Chapter 41).

This forceful appeal was buttressed by a religious and a social tendency: synthesis or syncretism of divinities and their worship, an impulse well attested in papyri (Bell 1953: 15–16), and intermarriage (Youtie 1955: 361 = 1973: 1.549; Lewis 1983: 32–3, 1986: 27–9; Clarysse and Thompson 2006: 2.297, 327–8;).

DOCUMENTARY PAPYRI

The first papyrus we will consider falls under the rubric 'documentary', or 'non-literary'. These texts relate to government, business, legal matters, and everyday life: documents such as leases, loans, receipts, petitions to officials, private letters, and so on (Palme 2009). Although religious perspectives gleaned from them are frequently anecdotal and incidental to their main purpose, they afford invaluable insights into cultic ideas and practice. We will begin with a petition called an *enteuxis* (addressed to the reigning monarch but usually handled by local officials), which illustrates the two tendencies mentioned in the previous paragraph.

> Asia to king Ptolemaios, greetings. I am wronged by Pooris the householder. For my husband Machatas was billeted in the village Pelousion and he divided (the property) with Pooris and constructed in his space a shrine to the Syrian goddess and Aphrodite Berenike. There was also a half-finished wall between the space of Pooris and that of my husband, and now that I wish to finish the wall to prevent trespass into our parts, Pooris has

> forbidden me to build it, although the wall does not belong to him, but he is contemptuous of the fact that my husband is dead. So I ask of you, king, if it is clear that the wall is ours, to order Diophanes the governor to write Menandros the overseer not to permit Pooris to forbid us from building it, in order that, having had recourse to you, king, I may obtain justice. (*P. Enteux*. 13, 222 BCE, Magdola; TM 3290)

The actors and circumstances of this text reflect the cultural amalgam prevalent in the papyri (Hengstl 1978: 374–5). Asia's deceased husband Machatas, a good Greek/Macedonian name, served in the army of Ptolemy III (Euergetes I) and was stationed in the Fayumic village Pelousion. The woman—whose own name, Asia, indicates she is Syrian—files this petition against Pooris, upon whose household Machatas was billeted, a hard fact of life for many native Egyptians (Lewis 1986: 21–4). The billeting arrangement was long term or possibly permanent, since Machatas divided the property with Pooris, built on his side a domestic shrine (Otto 1905: 169–70; *P. Enteux*. pp. 15–16), and was in the process of constructing a privacy wall.

He probably built for his wife the shrine dedicated to the Dea Syria, that is Atargatis, the northern Syrian name and manifestation of the goddess Astarte, whose worship among the Greeks and identification with Aphrodite were long established (Bell 1953: 14–16). Aphrodite, in turn, provided a convenient link with the reigning queen Berenike II, since Ptolemaic queens were typically identified with that goddess (Rowlandson 1998: 28–9). The synthesis of the Dea Syria, Aphrodite, and Ptolemaic ruler cult afforded the couple a comfortable compromise and provides us with an excellent example from the early Ptolemaic period of how intermarriage disseminated cults. As a result, the familial loyalty to the Syrian goddess ran deep; based on an inscription (*I Fay*. III 150), we know that, twenty-six years later, two of Machatas' sons were serving as priests in her cult (Rubsam 1974: 136–8; Rowlandson 1998: 28–9).

ORPHICA

By far the most significant text for the documentation and understanding of Orphic ideas is the Derveni Papyrus. Discovered at the pass of that name near Thessaloniki in 1962, the partially preserved roll was part of

the charred remains connected with a funeral pyre. It preserves a curious mixture of prose and poetry, a substantial part of it being a commentary on verses attributed to Orpheus. The roll itself dates to the mid- to late-fourth century BCE; its text, however, especially the poetry, is likely earlier (Bernabé 2007: 99). A vast literature on the papyrus has accumulated and thorough editions, introductions, and studies abound (e.g. Laks and Most 1997; Betegh 2004; Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006; more briefly, West 1983: 75–101; Bernabé 2007). The Egyptian papyri also offer valuable perspectives on Orphica, a striking example being an edict from the reign of Ptolemy Philopator (222–205 BCE):

> By the kings decree: Let those throughout the land who perform initiations into the mysteries of Dionysos sail down to Alexandria, those as far as Naukratis within 10 days from the day that the decree is posted, those further inland than Naukratis within 20 days, and let them register themselves with Aristoboulos at the record office, within three days from the day they arrive, and declare at once from whom they have received the rites as far back as three generations, and submit their sacred text [*hieros logos*], sealed, having inscribed each his own name. (*BGU* VI 1211 (215–205 BCE; TM 4527))

'Those . . . who perform initiations into the mysteries of Dionysos' translates *tous—telountas toi Dionysoi* (LSJ s.v. *teleo* III; Waanders 1983: 228–9). Plato (*Resp*. 364b–e) famously describes itinerate (literally, 'begging', *agurtai*) priests and prophets who frequent the doors of the rich and try to persuade individuals, and even cities, of the power of rituals contained in 'a jumble of books' by Orpheus and Musaios to expiate sins in this life and provide freedom from terrors in the next. This, in turn, corresponds closely to Theophrastos' account of the Orpheotelestai, 'those who perform the rites of the Orphic mysteries', whom the 'Superstitious Man' with his family visits monthly to participate in said rites (*Char*. 16.12; Diggle 2004: 369–70).

What purpose did the mandates laid on these individuals serve? Perhaps Philopator wished to exercise a certain quality control over those throughout Egypt who were dispensing initiatory and cleansing rituals in Dionysos' name, not only to have a record of the practitioners through registration, but also to evaluate the depth of their practice by identifying possible quacks and upstarts, and somehow to scrutinize the most important tools of their trade, their holy writings or handbooks (Henrichs 2003, and, with regard to this decree: 224–31). As an ardent devotee of Dionysiac worship (Burkert 1993: 263), Philopator had an important stake in this oversight of popular preachers who advocated an Orphic expression

of it, of which he may have held suspicions (for various interpretations: Henrichs 2003: 224–31; Herrero 2010: 53).

Some scholars have, in fact, suggested that the very fragmentary *P. Gurob* 1 (TM 65667), dated to about the same period, could represent just such a *hieros logos* that Philopator decreed be submitted to him (Burkert 1987: 70–1; Herrero 2010: 54). Whether or not that is the case, it certainly conveys a notion of what such a text might have looked like. Structurally, it consists of prose instructions for performing rituals and for speaking insider formulae ('tokens', 'passwords'), interlaced with sections of poetry (probably hexameters), which appear to be prayers. M. West's translation conveys an idea of its fragmentary nature and the restorations that he accepts or proposes in the square brackets (West 1983: 170–1, with slight adaptations). The metrical prayers are indented and in quotes:

> having what he finds | . . . [Let him] collect the raw pieces | . . .
> on account of the sacrament:
>
> > Accep]t my [offering] as the payment [for my lawless]
> > fath[ers].
> > Save me, gr[eat] Brimo [
> > And Demeter (and?) Rhea [
> > And the armed Kouretes; let us [
> >] that we may make a fine
> > sacrifice
> >] a ram and a he-goat
> >] boundless gifts.'
>
> . . . and pasture by the river | . . . [ta]king of the goat | . . . Let
> him eat the rest of the meat | . . . Let x not watch | consecrating it
> upon the burnt up | . . . Prayer of the [ ]:
>
> > Let [us] invoke [ ] and Eubouleus
> > And let us call upon [the queen] of the broad [Earth].
> > And the dear [ ]s. Thou, having
> > withered the [
> > [Grant the blessings] of Demeter and Pallas unto us.
> > O Eubou]leus, Erikepaios,
> > Save me [Hurler of Light]ning'

> THERE IS ONE DIONYSOS Tokens | . . . GOD THROUGH BOSOM | . . . I have drunk. Donkey. Oxherd | . . . password: UP AND DOWN to the | . . . and what has been given to you, consume it | . . . put into the basket | . . . [c]one, bull-roarer, knucklebones | . . . Mirror

The papyrus, although fragmentary, reveals core Orphic notions and mythic strains, syncretistically blended with ideas from other traditions (West 1983: 171; Hordern 2000: 132; on Orphism, see also, in this volume, Edmonds, Chapter 37). Apparently at the heart of the two metrical prayers are the invocation of prominent deities and an appeal for salvation (*soison me*, 'save me'). The first prayer addresses the figure Brimo, along with Demeter, Rhea (or perhaps Demeter-Rhea) and the 'armed Kouretes'. Brimo (Hesychios = *ischura*, 'mighty') is associated with chthonic goddesses of the Artemis-Hekate, Demeter, and Persephone circle (Kern in *RE* III 1 853–4; Bernabé and Jiménez 2008: 155–6). The first line of the second metrical prayer preserves further invocations: 'Let [us] invoke [ ] and Eubouleus And let [us] call upon [the queen] of the broad [Earth]' and then, '[Eubou]leus Erikepaios save me', two well-established names of Dionysos (Bernabé and Jiménez 2008: 102–3, 154).

The ritual of this text also involves passwords ('One Dionysos', 'God through Bosom', 'Up Down') and redemption: 'Accep]t my [offering] as the payment (*poinas*) [for my lawless] fath[ers].' The 'payment' or 'penalties' are associated with 'fathers', and, as West has restored, 'lawless' fathers, comparing an important Orphic testimonia cited from Olympiodoros (OFK 232), in which Dionysos seems to be receiving a prophecy or oracle regarding his future function as a god: 'Men will send hecatombs always in annual season and perform the rites, seeking release from their forefathers' unrighteousness; and you in power over them will free those you wish from toils and endless frenzy' (trans. West 1983: 99; cf. also one of the Bacchic gold tablets, Bernabé and Jiménez 2008: 266, trans. 151 (L 13); Graf and Johnston 2013: 38 (27 Pherae 1)).

Pollution due to hereditary sin is a well-established motif in the religious sensibilities of the Greeks (Parker 1983: ch. 6, esp. 203–6) and of other civilizations. Given the context of Orphic myth, where human beings rise from the soot of the Titans after Zeus vaporized them for dismembering and partially consuming Dionysos (West 1983: 164–6),

some scholars have interpreted this ancestral crime to be that of the Titans (Bernabé and Jiménez 2008: 156–8). This trope indeed emerges at the end of the papyrus in the third prose section, which speaks of the toys (a cone (or top), bull-roarer, knucklebones and mirror) used by the Titans to lure the divine child away from his protectors, the armed Kouretes, who appear in the first prayer, and who also guarded the infant Zeus (West 1983: 154–9; Guthrie 1993: 120–6; cf. also *PSI* VII 850; Herrero 2010: 55–6).

The papyrus' first two 'passwords', which precede the description of the toys, may also figure into this context of ritual connected with the infancy narrative of Dionysos. In his famous study of the 'One God' formula, Peterson (1926: 139–40) suggests that the acclamation 'One Dionysos' reflects a divine epiphany. Indeed, immediately following is a description of the Sabazian ritual act accompanied by the mystic formula *theos dia kolpou*, 'God through the bosom' or 'lap', in which a golden snake is inserted through the initiates' clothing on the bare skin, then withdrawn, a kind of allegory of Zeus' union with his daughter Persephone, resulting in Dionysos' birth (Clement *Protrep*. 2.15; West 1983: 97; Hordern 2000: 134).

I conclude this section with part of the Plato passage (*Resp*. 2.364b–c) referenced earlier:

> But beggar priests and prophets go to the doors of the rich and try to convince them that they have at their disposal divine power, procured by sacrifices and spells, to rectify with pleasurable festivals any crime he or his ancestors have committed against another, or likewise for a small price to harm whatever enemy he has designs on, by supposedly persuading the gods with certain charms and binding spells to be at their service.

Plato apparently conflates the popular Orphic/Dionysiac 'begging priests' who administer rites of purification and salvation, and popular *magoi*, who service their clients with spells that bind both gods and men. If so, this should not surprise us. Both possessed, in their religious and ritual arsenal, words of power that had miraculous effect.

THE GREEK MAGICAL PAPYRI

In *Pagans and Christians*, Robin Lane Fox (1986) characterizes ancient magic as follows:

> The art of magic was varied, but it divided, broadly, into two. Most of its spells can be defined as a type of sorcery which was used for competitive ends. They enlisted a personal spirit and deployed the power of words and symbols in order to advance a suit in love or in the law courts, to win at the games, to prosper in business or to silence envious rivals. . . .
>
> In the Imperial period Greek magical texts also catered for clients who had more spiritual aspirations. They served their wish to win immortality for their soul, to escape the confines of fate and necessity, and to confront a supreme god alone, in a personal 'introduction'.

In this section we explore aspects of the significant contributions made to the study of religion by the Greek magical papyri in the Greco-Egyptian society which produced them. We will consider two texts from that corpus, an oracular spell entitled, 'An Invocation to Apollo' (*PGM* I 263–347), and 'A Marvellous Binding Love Spell' (*PGM* IV 296–433), both from fourth-century CE magical handbooks, the working copies of professional *magoi* (Brashear 1995: 3412–20; Martinez 1995: 6–8). With regard to Lane Fox's analysis, the love spell belongs squarely in the realm of practical, competitive, or 'agonistic' magic, also sometimes called 'aggressive' magic: it seeks to constrain persons or force a certain kind of behaviour against their will. It does, however, especially toward its conclusion, incorporate elements of the more 'spiritual' type. The oracular spell straddles the boundary between the two forms. Whoever asks an oracle from a god in ancient Greece, even from the very earliest times, is often seeking advice on practical issues of life, love, money, and competition in the human arena (Parke 1967: 263–73; *SB* XII 11227 = Hengstl 1978: 164 (no. 66)). Conversely, receiving a direct word from a god involves some sort of divine encounter (see also, in this volume, Johnston, Chapter 32 and Platt, Chapter 33).

The Multicultural Chthonic/Solar Pantheon

Both texts well illustrate the two-tiered structure of many spells in the *PGM: logos* (the 'incantation' directed to various divine beings and spiritual powers, urging them to perform the wishes of the spell operator) and *praxis* (the 'act' or ritual accompanying the *logos*) (Martinez 1991: 8). The *praxis* of the oracular spell (*PGM* I 263–96) prescribes a sacrificial

ritual, while utilizing a phylactery made from a seven-leaved spray of laurel (Apollo-Helios' plant; Hopfner 1974: 294–8, §516), a lamp 'not painted red' (the colour associated with Apollo-Horus' enemy Seth; Betz 1985: 336), and the head of a wolf. Then one recites the *logos* (296–327), followed by a shorter *praxis* and *logos* (327–47). The main *logos* presents a number of difficulties (Smith 1984–1985; Hopfner 1990: 364–5 §218). The dominant structure is that of two hexametric hymns (in which the metre breaks down at several points): *PGM* I 296–314 (*PGM* hymn 23, vol. 2, 262), and *PGM* I 315–27 (*PGM* hymn 4.7ff., vol. 2, 239–40). The first of these falls into two distinctive sections; since some hexameters are problematic, I present the text as prose.

> 296–304: Lord Apollo, come with Paieon, answer me concerning what I ask with an oracle, Lord. Master, leave Mount Parnassus and Delphic Pytho, while our consecrated mouths speak things not to be uttered, first angel of god, great Zeus Iao, and you the heavenly keeper of the kosmos, Michael, and you, Gabriel archangel, I invoke. Come from Olympos, Abrasax, who rejoices in the East, may you come mercifully, who watches over the West from the East, Adonai; all nature trembles before you, father of the kosmos, *pakerbeth*.

The identification of Apollo with his Egyptian counterpart, the sun god Horus, appears as early as Herodotos (2.144.2 with Lloyd 1975 3.111; more generally Fauth 1995: 41–56). In the first lines of our *logos*, however, 'the most Greek of all gods' (Otto 1954: 78) appears in his full Hellenic garb, his name immediately linked with his *epiclesis* and hymn Paean, represented in our text as a separate deity or at least an alter ego (Graf 2012). Our spell summons him from his prophetic shrine of Delphi and the closely adjoining Mount Parnassos, sacred to Apollo as the home of the Muses, who form his choir and share with him oversight of artistic and literary inspiration. Although the epithet *angelos*, 'messenger', more frequently characterizes Hermes, the fuller title here given Apollo, 'First angel of Zeus', makes good sense from a Greek point of view, in that Apollo declares the purpose of his oracle 'to prophecy for men the unerring will of Zeus' (*Hom. hym. Apollo* 132; 'Zeus's mouthpiece', Fontenrose 1959: 252).

That ascription, however, provides a kind of fulcrum point on which the invocation tilts in a different direction. Zeus is identified with Iao (also *PGM* V 471–2; cf. IV 2773; Cook 1914: 232–5; Ganschinietz 1914: 714–15), the standard Greek version of the Hebrew name for God, the Tetragrammaton, YHWH (Yahweh; Ganschinietz 1914; Aune 1995),

accompanied by his supreme *angeloi*, Michael and Gabriel. The Yahweh theme continues, first with ‘Abrasax’, a celebrated magical appellation of obscure etymology (with the numerological value 365), but which occurs most frequently with Iao and other Yahweh names, referring to the same great demiurge (Brashear 1995: 3577). Our spell summons him, ‘come from Olympos’, which backtracks to the identification of this Yahweh cluster with Zeus. Next comes Adonai, ‘Lord’; a common Yahweh designation and in Jewish tradition the *Qere* (what was read in the synagogue) for YHWH (Weingreen 1959: 23). Then follows the Sethian *pakerbeth* (for its ironic identification with Apollo/Horus as well as Yahweh, see Smith 1984–1985: 210; Martinez 1991: 33, 80; Aune 1995: 7–8; Fauth 1995: 61).

In the second part of the oracular spell’s first hymn, this idea of the one great solar divinity under a multitude of names and symbols takes fascinating form (305–14):

> I adjure god’s head, which is Olympos, I adjure god’s seal, which is his vision, I adjure your right hand, which you held over the kosmos, I adjure god’s *krater* which possesses riches, I adjure the eternal god and Aion of all, I adjure self-existing Nature, mightiest Adonaios, I adjure Eloaios, setting and rising, I adjure these holy and divine names, that they send me the divine spirit and that he accomplish what I have in my heart and mind.

The hymn-spell shifts rhetorically from invocation to adjuration, with the word *horkizo* (‘I adjure’) repeated seven times with seven aspects and names of the deity designated in the previous section as the ‘father of the kosmos’. In the first four of these, various body parts, properties, and equipment of the great demiurge incorporate the kosmos itself, with his head as ‘Olympos’, most likely with its equivalency to ‘heaven’ (Schmidt 1939: 277–9, 291–2). The hymnist then adjures his ‘seal’, that is, his ‘vision’ (*horasis*), suggesting a Stoic sense to the word, vision being an actual emanation from the eye (Lindberg 1976: 8–11), here the sun god’s beams or radiance, with which he looks upon the earth (Hom. *Od*. 11.16), and that also being his outward physical manifestation, stamp, or ‘seal’ (*sphragis*) by which he is known. The notion approximates a hypostasis, similar in the New Testament to Hebrews 1.3, describing Jesus as the ‘stamp’ or ‘seal’ (*charakter*) of God’s essence (*hypostasis*), and the ‘radiance’ or ‘effulgence’ (*apaugasma*) of his glory.

The right hand of the demiurge that he ‘held over the kosmos’ probably does not describe protection or nurturing (for which ‘holds over’ would be

more appropriate), but the initial creation of it (cf. Isaiah 48.13; 4 Ezra 3.6). Creation motifs possibly continue in the next adjuration of the god's mixing bowl (*krater*), which has Orphic overtones (West 1983: 11, 262 n. 3; Hopfner 1990: 365 § 218; Copenhaver 1992: 131; as a creation trope, Pl. *Ti*. 34b–5, 41d). Our spell's obscure reference to this *krater* motif portrays it in cornucopic fashion: that which holds abundance.

This adjuration section summarizes these first four Greek-Orphic based designations in the Kosmokrator title Aion ('endless time'), in *PGM* a common equivalent of Helios (Drijvers, 'Aion', *DDD* 22; Betz 1985: 331–2), and then reverts to Yahweh names, Adonaios (here in its declinable form) and Eloaios (Betz 1985: 334). Philosophic ideas again emerge with Adonaios' bi-name, 'self-existing Nature', reflecting Hellenistic Jewish and middle Platonic notions of God as true and absolute existence (LXX Ex. 3.14 *ego eimi ho on*, 'I am the one who is'; Philo, *Op*. 172; *Abr*. 121; Merkelbach and Totti 1991: 163; Dillon 1996: 136, 155). The fact that both Jewish names are to be identified as the sun god is shown by the epithets 'setting and rising'. The 'divine spirit', which the demiurge is called upon to send, is the spirit of the dead, about whom more will be said (see 'The Funerary Context', below).

Before considering the second hymn of the oracular spell, we will introduce and begin a detailed discussion of the second of our two texts, the *Philtrokatadesmos Thaumastos*, 'Marvellous Binding Love Spell' (*PGM* IV 296–406), which offers us both similar and varied perspectives on the multicultural pantheon and theology of the magical papyri. In addition to our handbook text, versions of this spell occur in five *defixiones* (lead tablets), a fact which evinces its considerable fame and prestige (on the tablets, Daniel and Maltomini 1990: 174–213, nos 46–51; Martinez 1991: *passim*, esp. 6–8, 131–2).

The *praxis* section (296–335) prescribes making a male and female effigy, writing magical formulae on the female, piercing different parts of her body with thirteen needles, binding them to the tablet on which the *logos* is written, and depositing the ensemble on a grave (a similar female figure was actually excavated with one of the tablets mentioned above; Kambitsis 1976, plate 31; Faraone 2002: 319–23; Wilburn 2012: 28–31). The long, involved *logos* (335–406) I translate selectively as follows:

> I deposit with you this binding spell, gods of the underworld, *Yesemigadon* and Kore Persephone Ereschigal and Adonis who is *barbaritha*, (and) Hermes-Thoth of the

> underworld *phokentazepseu aerchthathou misonktaik albanachambre* and mighty Anoubis *psirinth*, who holds the keys to the gates of Hades, and (with you), chthonic spirits, gods and goddesses who suffered untimely death, lads and maidens . . . I adjure all spirits who are in this place to help this spirit. And rouse yourself for me, whoever you are, whether male or female, and go into every place . . . and bring NN, whom NN bore . . . Because I adjure you by the fearful and dreadful name of him, at the hearing of whose name the earth will open, at the hearing of whose name the demons will greatly fear, at the hearing of whose name the rivers and the rocks are cleft. I adjure you, *nekydaimon* . . . by the name *barbaritha chenmbra barouchambra*, and by the name *abrat* Abrasax *sesengen barpharanges*, and by the glorious *aoia mari*, and by the name *marmareoth marmarauoth marmaraoth marechthana amarza; maribeoth* . . . Do this, bind her. . . . For I am *Barbadonai*, who conceals the stars, the bright ruler of heaven, the Lord of the kosmos *atthouin iathouin* etc.

At first blush the invocations of the first hymn of the oracular spell and those in this prosaic love spell and the deities invoked seem quite different. The love spell employs a more self-conscious syncretism, with Persephone united with her Babylonian counterpart Erschigal and Hermes with the Egyptian Thoth. In addition, the deities in the love spell bear the description ‘chthonic’ (*katachthonioi*).

A measure of scrutiny, however, reveals those differences to be not as significant as they first seem. Indeed, the gods at the outset of the love spell are the traditionally chthonic Persephone, Hermes-Thoth, and Adonis, whereas the oracular spell first invokes the supremely Olympian Apollo (with Paian and, by implication, the Muses) and Zeus. Those latter gods, however, merge quickly with the Hebraic Iao-Adonai(-Abrasax) cluster, corresponding to the even larger framework of the solar demiurge, who ‘rejoices in the East’ but ‘who inspects (watches over) the West from the East’. That last ascription has a significance that extends beyond the directional journey of the sun or its gaze. ‘The West’ in Egyptian theology commonly designates the underworld (cf. the epithet of the god of the dead, Osiris, ‘First of the Westerners’; Frankfort 1948: 197–8), and the sun god’s concern with it characterizes him as a chthonic as well as heavenly deity (more on this below; see ‘The Funerary Context’).

A more significant difference, one that stems, at least in part, from the oracular spell’s hexametric structure, is the love spell’s considerably stronger emphasis on the power of names. It is at this point that influence from Hebraic and Egyptian religious perspectives emerges most prominently in Greek magical texts. We may take as an example a famous passage from the *Book of the Dead*. As the deceased stands before the entrance of the blessed realm, the parts of the gates speak to him:

‘I shall not let you enter through me’, says the beam of this gate, ‘Unless you tell me my name.’
‘Plummet-of-the-Place-of-Truth is your name.’ . . .
‘I shall not let you pass over me’, says the threshold of this gate, ‘Unless you tell my name.’
‘Ox-of-Geb is your name.’ . . .
‘I shall not open for you’, says the bolt-clasp of this gate, ‘Unless you tell my name.’
‘Eye-of-Sobk-Lord-of-Bakhu is your name.’ . . .
‘You know us, pass over us.’ (Lichtheim 1976: 2.130)

So vital was knowledge of the true and secret name, that in Egyptian conception it becomes a means of salvation. We remember from the previous section on Orphica the redemptive power of ‘passwords’.

In our love spell, the operator displays his prowess in name power by his prolific use of *voces magicae* (‘magical words’) or, more appropriately, *nomina barbara*, ‘foreign names’, after the traditional Greek or Egyptian ones, expressed in italics in the translation given in this chapter. Some have been successfully deciphered on the basis of Hebrew, Egyptian, and other languages. Passages from the *PGM* help us understand the ethos behind them: ‘Come Lord Hermes . . . obey me . . . I know your foreign names: *pharnarthar barachel xtha*’ (VIII 15–21); ‘Greatest Typhon, hear me, for I speak your true names *ioerbeth iopakerbeth*’ (IV 277–8); ‘Arktos . . . I entreat you . . . that you do such and such because I invoke you by your holy names . . . which you cannot resist; *Brimo rhexichon* etc.’ (VII 686–92). Practitioners of magic considered these names more ancient and authentic, and thus, as in the *Book of the Dead*, effective for inducing divine action. Indeed, those who have accurate knowledge of them have power over the divine and demonic beings they invoke. The oracular spell certainly does not neglect them, with its use of the name *pakerbeth* (see ‘The Multicultural Chthonic/Solar Pantheon’, above) and a string of *nomina barbara* at the end of its second hymn (see the next section).

The Funerary Context

Returning now to the oracular spell, the second hymn of the *logos* (315–27) is actually an excerpt from an independent hymn to the sun god, which occurs in various versions in three other passages in *PGM* (IV 436–61; 1957–89; VIII 74–81). A composite edition of it, based on all of the versions, appears as *PGM* hymn 4 (vol. 2, 239–40 = Heitsch 1963: LIX 4).

Its presence in four forms among the magical papyri attests to a similar level of prestige as our *Philtrokatadesmos Thaumastos*. I translate it as it stands in our oracular spell in *PGM* I, but in the interpretation that follows I incorporate elements of the other versions (and the composite edition).

> Hear, blessed one, I summon you, governor of heaven and earth, of chaos and Hades, where dwell . . . send this *daimon*, by night forcibly driven by my incantations, by your commands, from whose corpse this is, and let him declare to me all that I desire in my thoughts, speaking truthfully, (send him) in gentleness, mildness, and not being of hostile mind toward me. And do not you be wrathful at my sacred incantations, but keep my whole body intact to come to the light; for it is you who prescribed the learning of these things among men. I invoke your name, equal in numerical value to the fates themselves: *achaipho thotho*, etc.

The poem invokes the sun god as 'governor of heaven and earth, of chaos and Hades, where dwell . . .'; here our text omits some material. Other versions of the hymn supply what is missing: 'where dwell men's spirits who previously looked upon the light. And so now I pray, blessed, immortal, master of the world, if you traverse the hollow of the earth in the place of the dead, send me this *daimon* in the middle hours of night' (*PGM* hymn 4.8–13). Whereas *Odyssey* book 11 describes the realm of the dead as a place where 'the bright sun never looks down with its rays' (15–16), here we see the Egyptian notion of the underworld frequented daily by Helios. The 'chthonic-Olympian gap', so characteristic of the Homeric religious worldview (Burkert 1985: 199–203, 205) does not apply in the Egyptian perspective, as Jan Assmann observes (2005: 392): 'Egypt differed radically from religions that made a strict distinction between deities of the sky and of the netherworld. In Egypt, the sun god embraced both realms.'

As supreme chthonic deity, the solar demiurge has the authority to mobilize the lesser denizens of that realm, including the spirits of the dead. The singer of our hymn calls upon him to do so; he has a particular ghost in mind: '. . . send *this* spirit—from whose corpse this is'. It is likely that our spell operator performs the hymn at a cemetery, where he has identified a particular tombstone that designates the corpse as an *ahoros*, that is, one who died a premature death, before their fated time, or one whom he knows to be a *biaiothanatos*, one who died a violent death. The latter class may include one who fell in battle or someone murdered or executed (Waszink 1952; Johnston 1999: 148–53, for the complexity of this category). The former group particularly comprised those who died

young, especially girls unmarried and/or without children, as the love spell (‘lads and maidens’) and gravestone epitaphs of the period make clear: ‘Weep for my young age, one dead before her time and unmarried’ (*SB* III 6706.16; Martinez 1991: 48; in general Johnston 1999: ch. 5, esp. 175–6).

Such spirits form a special chthonic cohort, who, like the dismal ghosts conjured by Odysseus (*Od*. 11.38–41), have not been fully integrated into the chthonic community, because their death occurred before the proper time, and, in the case of the *ahoroi*, before they fulfilled their humanity. Magical spells in the papyri and curse tablets press these spirits (along with the *ataphoi*, ‘unburied’) into their service because of their availability and anger with regard to their untimely deaths, deprived honours, and limbo state (*DT* 23.19–20 (third cent. CE); cf. 22.30–1; 25.4–5 et al.).

The ‘Marvelous Binding Love Spell’ instructs one to write the *logos* on a lead tablet (to which are attached male and female figurines) and then ‘Place it at sunset by the grave of one who died a premature or violent death’ (*PGM* IV 333–4). Later, the inhabitant of this grave is called the *nekydaimon*, ‘spirit of the dead’, who is conjured on the authority of the chthonic deities and of the all-powerful name of the supreme sun god and sent to infect the beloved victim with hopeless erotic desire for the spell operator. He does so with the help of other ghosts who roam about the same cemetery where the operator performs the magic.

We have seen that these notions of the untimely, violently dead, occupying a liminal region between the depths of the underworld and the normal human realm, play a vital role in Greek literature from Homer onward (see, in this volume, Voutiras, Chapter 27). They undergo, however, considerable development in the late antique magical papyri and other types of magical documents. In the love spell the *nekydaimon* has *eros*-inducing powers. In Homer, whereas only the soul of Teiresias has oracular powers, in our hexametric spell the *ahoros* conjured at the grave is to ‘declare to me all that I desire in my thoughts, speaking truthfully’. The manipulated spirits, however, gain these powers by virtue of their relationship to the upper echelons of the chthonic hierarchy. A prominent deity or group of deities must send the *daimon*, and in the oracular text it does not participate willingly: ‘forcibly (*hyp’ ananke*) driven by my incantations, by your [the sun god’s] commands’ (*PGM* I 318). The love spell expresses this *ananke*, ‘necessity’, apropos to its greater emphasis on

names of power: ‘I adjure you *nekydaimon* by the fearful and dreadful name of him, at the hearing of whose name the earth will open, at whose name the spirits will greatly fear, . . . Do not disobey, *nekydaimon*, the commands and names’, and so on (*PGM* IV 356–68).

The Oracular Procedure

Having surveyed the divine personnel and the funerary mechanics of both texts, we may now explore the hexametric spell’s oracular setting and procedure. As we have seen, the sun god sends the spirit of the dead to pronounce the oracle. Other versions of the second hymn fix the time frame of this event more precisely than that of *PGM* I: ‘Send me this *daimon* in the middle hours of the night’ (*PGM* hymn 4.12). This temporal framework elucidates the oracular procedure as a dream visitation, and, by extension, possibly incubation, that is, an enquirer spending the night in a temple and experiencing a visitation from a divine being who most often provides healing or a prescription for such (see, in this volume, Graf, Chapter 34). Our hymn may have originally served some cultic function in this context, such as a hymn sung before the enquirer lay down to sleep (Merkelbach and Totti 1990: 11, §20).

One of its other versions (*PGM* VIII 74–81) occurs in a spell which bears the title ‘Request for a dream oracle of Bes’ (64). For one who had any knowledge of oracular sites in Egypt, that phrase would point to the Thebaid town of Abydos, the location of the Memnonion of Sethos I, an ancient cult centre of Osiris established in the nineteenth dynasty, which supported a famous incubation/dream oracle of Osiris-Serapis during the Hellenistic period (Frankfurter 2005: 238). The oracular character of the temple continued into the Roman era, but with the dwarf-like, apotropaic deity Bes assuming the main prophetic role (Ammianus Marcellinus 19.12.3–6; Frankfurter 1998: 169–74). This Bes oracle rose to international fame, and in addition to traditional incubation apparently employed a ‘ticket’ schema of consultation in which the enquirer presented the god (i.e. his priest) with two papyrus chits stating opposite scenarios (‘Shall I keep my job?’ . . . ‘Shall I lose my job?’). The god was to ‘bring out’ the correct answer (Ammianus Marcellinus 19.12.3–6; *SB* XII 11227 = Hengstl 1978: 164–5; Clarysse 2009: 571, 579).

It would not be surprising to find a hymn to the sun god associated with Bes' famous oracle, since Bes himself, and other Bes-like divinities, evinced strong solar affiliations and had links to other solar deities. A popular art form known as the Horus-cippi, which flourished in the Greco-Roman period, closely associates Bes with Horus-Harpokrates, the son of Osiris and the youthful solar deity (the Egyptian equivalent of Apollo, with whom the oracular spell began). Representative of this form (of which there are hundreds) is the Metternich Stele (360–343 BCE), which portrays the face or mask of Bes above Horus, who displays his cosmic-solar prowess and mastery of chaos, holding snakes and scorpions and other animals in his hands and treading on crocodiles (Frankfurter 1998: 47–8; Clarysse 2009: 583 and cf. figure 24.11). If this hymn to the sun god, from which the second part of our spell is excerpted, had its origin in the Abydos Besas oracle (Merkelbach and Totti 1990: 10–16) or some other well-known incubation shrine, this could help explain its fame and wide dissemination. Whatever its initial *Sitz im Leben*, it has been lifted from that context and employed in various settings in the *PGM*, allowing individuals to access the sun god's power to mobilize the spirits of the dead for oracular communication through dreams in private contexts, in this case, a kind of merger between dream incubation and a ghost-conjuring ritual, performed at a cemetery.

CONCLUSION

Although the magical technology of our two spells involves both writing and speaking, the former emerges more prominently in the love spell, which has a decidedly documentary focus. Its *praxis* says to inscribe the *logos* on a lead tablet, bind the male and female effigies to it, and then 'Place it by a grave of one who suffered a premature or violent death.' The inscribed lead tablet is not only a vital part of the *materia magica*, but also figures in the opening words of the *logos* itself: 'I deposit with you, gods of the underworld, this binding spell.' This fulfils the prescription of the *praxis* ('place it beside'; *paratithon*) but also goes beyond it, by use of *parakatatithemai*, 'I deposit'. In other words, the act of laying the written

text at the grave makes the underworld deities and *daimones* the guarantors of the spell and responsible for its execution. This idea of the written text as a deposition occurs fairly often in curse tablets (Martinez 1991: 36–7).

Our oracular spell, with its hymnic style and hexametric structure, emphasizes oral performance more strongly. But both orality and writing are important for both; and we should not assume, based on presuppositions about written and oral stages of epic poetry, that the greater emphasis on the written text suggests a later stage of development and perspective. The fourth-century BCE 'Curse of Artemesia' (*PGM* XL) has a similar documentary focus. In it, a women curses her (apparently) estranged husband for depriving her deceased daughter of her funerary gifts: 'Artemisia has set down this appeal, beseeching Oserapis and the gods seated with Oserapis to render judgment, and while this appeal lies here, by no means may the father of the little girl find the gods merciful.' Vital to the spell's success is the fact that the operator has 'set it down' in the temple of the great god Oserapis in Memphis, and its continued effectiveness depends on it staying there, 'on deposit' as it were. The written text itself secures the vital link between the operator and the chthonic powers.

But the fundamental technology that the love spell employs is names of power, and this it does by stylistic crescendo. It begins with the depositing of the spell with the great underworld gods, followed by their magical, or true, names. The operator extends the deposition to the *daimones* or ghosts who occupy the cemetery, adjuring them to assist the *nekydaimon*. He, however, takes the name magic to a heightened level, when he threatens to utter the supreme and secret name of the great god, who is Iao-Adonai-Abrasax, as in the oracular spell. But unlike the oracular spell, those names are engulfed by numerous *nomina barbara*, which, with those three great names, seem almost 'cover names' for the greatest, unutterable name, which will cause cosmic ruin if actually pronounced.

But if that were not daunting enough, the spell's threatening crescendo reaches a henotheistic apex, when the operator demands the *daimon*'s obedience, claiming to become the great demiurge himself: 'I am *Barbadonai*, who conceals the stars, the bright ruler of heaven; the lord of the kosmos' (*PGM* IV 385–6). Although the 'I am' revelatory formula has currency in all three of the major religious traditions which stream into the

PGM: Egyptian, Jewish, and Greek (Martinez 1991: 92–4), the entire structure of the love spell seems to take its cue from Egyptian funerary and soteriological ideas. As we saw in the *Book of the Dead* passage cited (see 'The Multicultural Chthonic/Solar Pantheon', above), the deceased gains access to the divine realm through knowledge of names of power; but in Egyptian religion, ultimate salvation occurs only when the dead himself becomes Osiris (Morenz 1975: 197–8, 206–7).

But what is disconcerting to modern sensibilities is the fact that this cosmic drama of ascent and assimilation through the power of names, culminating in merger with the supreme divine personality itself, unfolds for the purpose of manipulating lower spiritual powers for the crass goal of forcing a girl to submit to the operator's desires. The contrast with which we began this section between competitive/practical and revelatory magic has helped students of this fascinating phenomenon understand its varied textures and functions. But for many of its practitioners, perhaps that distinction did not mean that much.

Suggested Reading

For papyri and papyrology in general, see Turner 1980, *OHP*, and papyri.info. A fine, although somewhat dated, lexicon of religion in the papyri is Ronchi 1974–1977. Two helpful monographs on the subject are Bell 1953 and Rübsam 1974. For the magical papyri the standard edition of texts is *PGM* with the English translation of Betz 1985. Several texts published after *PGM* are collected in Daniel and Maltomini 1990–1991. Introductions to the magical papyri: Betz 1985; Brashear 1995 with an exhaustive annotated bibliography. For an excellent collection of essays, see Faraone and Obbink 1991.

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References

Please note: abbreviations of papyrus editions (*BGU, Chrest. Wilck*., *PSI, SB, Sel. Pap*., *UPZ*, and all beginning with *P*.) follow the conventions of *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets*, ed. J. F. Oates, R. S. Bagnall, S. J. Clackson, Alexandra A. O'Brien, J. D. Sosin, T. G. Wilfong, and K. A. Worp. 2001 (5th edn). Latest edition online: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/texts/clist.html>.

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PART III

MYTHS? CONTEXTS AND REPRESENTATIONS

CHAPTER 11

EPIC

RICHARD P. MARTIN

INTRODUCTION

UNTIL the mid-twentieth century, the poetry attributed to Homer, Hesiod, and the authors of the 'Epic Cycle' provided the earliest written evidence for Greek religious practices of sacrifice, dedication, prayer, cult song, and funeral ritual. In addition, such poetry—especially the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—created an indelible impression about how Greeks imagined the gods: their familial relations, desires, and interaction, for better or worse, with mortals. While forced by lack of other data to use hexameter poems as testimony for practices and beliefs, modern scholars were less comfortable adopting the judgement of Herodotos, who credited Homer and Hesiod, above all, with actually forming the Greek religious imagination (Hdt. 2.53). In his excursus on Egypt, the fifth-century historian writes:

> where each of the gods arose from, or whether all had always existed, and what they were like in form, they [the Greeks] did not know until yesterday or the day before, one might say. For I reckon that Hesiod and Homer existed not more than four hundred years before me, and it is *they* who taught the Greeks the origin of the gods (*theogonie*), gave the gods their titles (*eponymiai*), distinguished the honours due them (*timai*) and their skills (*technai*), and indicated their forms.

In effect, Herodotos transfers to the poets what Hesiod, in the *Theogony* (73), credited to Zeus, who, after the victory over his father Kronos, assigned honours (*timai*) to each of the immortals. Because Herodotos also makes implausible or demonstrably wrong assertions that the Greek religion largely came from Egypt, and that certain named individuals were solely responsible for introducing such institutions as the cult of Dionysos, his observations about the broad influence of poetry on religion have met with some scepticism (Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 34–6, 274–5; see also, in this volume, Kleibl, Chapter 41).

The decipherment of Linear B in 1952, combined with increasingly sophisticated studies of polytheistic religions, made the fictional images of epic look more idiosyncratic than had been suspected previously. Gradually, these images have come to seem less representative of the complex picture reconstructed from archaeological, linguistic, and epigraphic evidence. Epic leaves much unmentioned that must have been important 'on the ground', or stylizes it beyond easy recognition. Consequently, the bold statement of Herodotos about the role of poetry now seems less extreme a position. It is not impossible that fiction played the role Herodotos accords it.

In approaching 'religion' in Greek epic, we need to keep in mind that diverse traditions, a range of narrative options, and the changing rhetoric needed to satisfy various audiences prevent the easy reading of epic as embodying long-held Greek views. The depictions in epic must be interpreted, first of all, as part of a self-contained *poetic* imaginary, and only later as a source to be aligned with other religious discourses in Greek life of the eighth through sixth centuries BCE. Furthermore, the world of the two poets named by Herodotos existed alongside religious representations from now lost epics, especially the series of 'Cyclic' poems on the Trojan War and poems about traditions from Thebes or Corinth. In the pitiful fragments remaining (West 2003) we find such disparate depictions as Poseidon coupling with the Fury (Erinys) in the form of a horse (*Thebaid* fr. 11); Zeus in pursuit of Nemesis, who takes the form of a fish, and ultimately bears Helen (*Cypria* fr.10); and Zeus dancing (*Titanomachy* fr. 8). The lost epics also contained details at odds with what became mainstream traditions: that the gods were originally worshipped in the form of pillars (*Phoronis* fr. 4, and Eumelus fr. 28); that the world emerged from the upper air, Aither; that Zeus was born in Lydia;

and that Cheiron the Centaur first taught humans oaths, sacrifices, and the 'patterns of Olympos' (*Titanomachy* frr. 1, 2, and 13 respectively). The superiority of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* over these other epics was recognized by Aristotle (*Poet*. 1459a37), and it is largely due to such aesthetic judgements that we owe the poems' survival. If, however, we possessed only the Cycle and other non-Homeric works, religious elements would appear more bizarre, arbitrary, and primitive than in the view given by the relatively more rational Homer and Hesiod.

This chapter will focus on three types of Homeric episodes that bear a 'religious' meaning, while distinguishing, as far as possible, literary intention from the representation of actual ritual. As we shall see, however, to avoid false dichotomies one must articulate the modes in which stylized acts and conventions—verbal and gestural—form a bond between the fictional and the 'real'.

HEROES IN THEIR CUPS

Like Herodotos, the poet of the *Iliad* takes an historical perspective. The warriors at Troy are sundered from the ordinary world of the present-day audience. Apart from the individual heroic deeds that can, in these latter days, only be accomplished by *two* men (such as Hektor lifting a huge rock: *Il*. 12.447–9), the most conspicuous sign of the chronological chasm imagined by Homeric poetry occurs in the story of the wall hastily constructed by the Achaians atop the bodies of their war-dead. To Poseidon's objection that the new construction, made without a sacrifice to the gods, will obscure the fame of the city wall built earlier by him and Apollo, Zeus promises that the two gods will eventually overturn the threat (*Il*. 7.442–63). In a flash-forward (*Il*. 12.5–35) Poseidon and Apollo are described flooding the plain, after the Trojan War, erasing all traces of the Achaian monument. Thus, the *Iliad* re-imagines heroic ritual actions, but, at the same time, distances itself from a period when gods and heroes were in contact on the battlefield. In this regard, it resembles the poetry of Hesiod, in which the age of heroes is sandwiched between the ages of Bronze and Iron, thus clearly marked off from the era of the narrating poet

(*Op*. 156–73). Unlike the Hesiodic vision, however, the *Iliad* deletes links to a possible hero-cult, at least in the case of rituals surrounding the bones of individual warriors at Troy. For, as the poem implies, the absence of the wall means that the bodies it covered were also swept away. By contrast, Hesiod's mention of the god-like beings from the Gold and Silver ages dwelling 'on the earth' (*epichthonioi*) or 'beneath the earth' (*hupochthonioi*) (*Op*. 123, 141) who are honoured after death appears to be a conscious allusion to a hero-cult (Nagy 1999: 151–4).

Generational difference may be a factor in depictions. Nestor, whose life spans three generations, has special status and vigour (Frame 2009). Even among younger heroes, only Nestor easily lifts the ornate drinking vessel that he brought to the war (*Il*. 11.636–7). At a crucial point in the battle, Nestor escorts the wounded healer Machaon off the field to his own hut. There his maid and war-prize, with the significant name Hekamede ('working with special skill from afar'), provides a drink (*kykeon* 624) of wine, cheese, and barley groats.

The poem does not specify that Nestor now performs a ritual. Only the descriptions of Hekamede as 'like a goddess' (638) and the barley as 'sacred' (*hieron*, 631) hint at religious associations. Yet within Archaic hexameter poetry, the *kykeon* is clearly homologous to ritual by being a 'dietary symbol for suspended worlds' (Kitts 2001: 311). Furthermore, the Archaic *Hymn to Demeter* designates as *kykeon* the mixed beverage (minus the cheese) that the goddess herself drinks while disguised at Eleusis. The hymnic reference clearly alludes to drinking *kykeon* (thus named) as central to the Eleusinian ritual complex. Finally, the specific contexts, composition, and diction used to describe the Greek *kykeon* support an ancient Indo-European heritage akin to Vedic *soma* rituals (Watkins 1978). In sum, the *Iliad*'s depiction of an apparently casual drink has definite ritual resonances, though within the poem it is simply heroic protocol. By tying the *kykeon* ritual to the oldest warrior, Nestor, the poem may hint at its antiquity, although only comparative study reveals broader meanings. This strategy of 'secularization' often marks Homeric poetics. In the *Iliad*, it extends even to the depiction of battle itself, since this can be viewed as an overarching ritual dedicated to the gods (Martin 1983; cf. Hiltebeitel 1990). Larger questions of the audience's awareness of such deep connections, and of possible ritual origins of epic, deserve consideration.

Another well-wrought vessel brought from home (*depas* at *Il*. 16.225—same word for Nestor's at *Il*. 11.632) is significant in terms of special connections with the hero who uses it. Just as only Nestor could hoist his cup, so only Achilles drinks from this one, and the libations he pours from it are exclusively to Zeus, in his role as patron of Dodona (*Il*. 16.225–7). To mark the importance of the scene, the poet describes Achilles taking the cup from a chest packed by his mother Thetis, purifying it with sulphur, washing his hands, and carefully taking a position in the centre of his forecourt. Unlike Nestor's provision of the restorative *kykeon*, Achilles' pouring from the cup is a recognized ritual act, accompanied by a prayer to Zeus as 'lord of Dodona, Pelasgian one' (*Il*. 16.233) unparalleled within epic. In his recital of the past favour that Zeus granted in honouring him, Achilles expatiates about the distant cult site in the northern Greek territory Epiros, mentioning its bad weather and its oracle-interpreter priests the Selloi, who sleep on the ground with unwashed feet. After the ethnographic details, he begs Zeus to grant his retainer, Patroklos, glory-bringing power (*kudos*), a spectacle that will, in turn, reflect well on himself. His final wish, for Patroklos to return unharmed after repelling the Trojans, is only half fulfilled by Zeus (*Il*. 16.249–52)—a unique outcome for epic prayers.

Greek lore recorded that Pyrrha and Deucalion, the Flood survivors, established the shrine of Zeus at Dodona; that Neoptolemos, son of Achilles, later came to colonize the surrounding area; and that Achilles himself had divine honours there (Plut. *Pyrrh*. 1.1–4). Odysseus allegedly visited Dodona to obtain instructions from Zeus' oracle-giving oak tree about managing his homecoming (*Od*. 14.327–30, 19.296–9). Archaeology has confirmed the importance of this cult site from Mycenaean to Greco-Roman times. Connecting the two central Homeric protagonists, Achilles and Odysseus, with the mythically oldest oracular site (predating Delphi) seems more than accidental. A historicizing drive behind epic here, too, may express the antiquity of tradition, underlining the genre's deep roots.

Another way of viewing the connection raises a principle of general importance for 'epic' religion: sometimes details about particular cults or gods may be selected for their thematic resonance within the poetry. The Selloi are doubly marked as having a paradoxical connection with the earth—on the one hand, impure, contrary to usual Greek qualifications, but, on the other, possessing special mantic powers. We are reminded of

the prophet Melampous (‘Blackfoot’) (Gartziou-Tatti 1990). These curious details, seemingly inessential to Achilles’ prayer, take on new meaning subsequently. Hearing of the death of Patroklos, Achilles himself defiles his head and body with dust and ashes, and sprawls in the dirt (*Il*. 18.23–7). Although stemming from crushing grief, these actions also carry signals of ritual debasement, as if Achilles (like the Selloi) is wholly removed from the world of mortals. The self-abasement of the suppliant Odysseus in the ashes of the Phaiakians’ hearth (*Od*. 7.153–4) functions similarly. Both scenes bring together literary suspense—establishing a ‘dead’ point in the plot—with stylized ritual behaviour.

Another libation by Achilles further underlines his capacious ‘heroic’ religion. During a magnificent funeral, the pyre of Patroklos will not light (*Il*. 23.192), so Achilles pours libations from a splendid goblet beseeching the winds Boreas and Zephyros. There ensues a carefully narrated type-scene of message-bringing and guest reception, as the divine Iris transmits Achilles’ request, and the winds rush across the sea to whip the flames (*Il*. 23.200–21). All night long, as the pyre rages, Achilles pours libations on the ground. Worth emphasizing is the narrative elaboration, based on the supremacy of the protagonist and the highly significant point in the plot. The poet creatively builds an initial failure of ritual (the smouldering pyre) into a spectacular display of the power of Achilles’ prayer that instantly rouses the cosmos.

Finally, Nestor’s looming stature as ritual actor is glimpsed again when the poet of the *Odyssey* uses heroic libations for ironic effect *(Od*. 3.40–64). Telemachus and Athena (disguised as Mentor) approach the aged Pylian at a bull sacrifice (feeding 4500 persons) for Poseidon. Nestor’s son Peisistratus formally greets the elder of the pair with wine in a golden cup and directs him to pray to Poseidon, after which Telemachus will do the same. The prayer of Athena/Mentor is for glory for Nestor and his sons, and a ‘grace-filled return’ (*khariessan amoiben*) for the rest of the Pylians, along with fulfilment of the mission of Telemachus. ‘So she prayed,’ says the poet (*Od*. 3.62) ‘and she herself was bringing all to fulfillment.’ While an audience is surely amused at the sight of Athena thus getting the best of her traditional rival, and Nestor’s familial patron, at the sea-god’s own feast, we should also note the close resemblance of her prayer to epigraphically attested formulations (e.g. *CEG* 326, the seventh-century BCE Mantiklos dedication, on which see Day 2010: 36–48). Hers is, in

other words, the sort of utterance that could easily have been made in non-literary contexts in the Archaic period. The relationship to 'real' ritual is further complicated by recent discoveries at Ano Englianos (site of a Pylian ruler's palace), evidencing repeated massive ritual consumption of cattle: the *Odyssey*'s bull feast may echo real rites (Stocker and Davis 2004).

In sum, the rituals associated with cups are representative of the tendency to 'heroize' religion, but this is not solely epic exaggeration: in Mycenaean times and earlier, at least some outsized displays and practices already Archaic, from Indo-European times, did in fact exist.

CALLING ON THE GODS

Epic has an inherent aesthetic bias towards the evaluative prizing of well-done actions and 'performances'. Most conspicuously, forceful speaking equates with powerful deeds as paired ideals of heroic behaviour (*Il*. 9.443). Other 'deeds' such as prayer, vows, sacrifices, and dedications, comprising a tight nexus of 'religious' acts, are thus also given poetic accreditation through Homeric song. Once again, there is the danger of being misled into thinking that any offering might embody an actual rite, rather than a stylized and composite vision within a fiction. Primarily, such rites arise as poetic events, highlighting and motivating narratives.

In this brief account, we can focus only on one subcategory: prayer. While offering us a prime example of the 'conative' use of language—words employed to influence divinities—prayers are also rhetorical performances featuring conventional tropes. The 'type-scene' of prayer has been analysed as having components such as the raising the hands, invocation of a god, recollection of past favours, and requests (Morrison 1991: 146–9; Edwards 1992: 315). Yet bare typological accounting does not capture the kaleidoscope of styles found in individual prayers, shaped as they are by episodic characterizations.

Within epic, prayers occur in virtually every major episode, and cover a broad spectrum. At one end, they are simply courtesy gestures, as when Odysseus in disguise, gladdened at the reception by his swineherd

Eumaios, says ‘may Zeus and the other immortals grant you that which you most desire’ (*Od*. 14.53–4). The same hero, in a slightly different formulation, prays to Zeus that Telemachus obtain ‘as much as he desires’ (*Od*. 17.354–5). An audience finds irony in these simple wishes because it knows that both son and swineherd themselves desire the triumphant return of the long-absent hero heard praying. In these cases, what might have been taken as a prayer for general, longer-term satisfaction, is shown by the narrative to have a specific, shorter-term result.

Other prayers within the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are more readily categorized by their intended time frames. Odysseus, in a footrace during the funeral games for Patroklos, for example, utters a prayer for more speed, which Athena grants at once (*Il*. 23.768–72). Immediate results are also called for by warriors in the heat of battle, as when Menelaos, casting his spear, prays that Zeus let him take vengeance on Paris for abducting Helen. Elevating his individual, short-term prayer to the level of general principle, he requests victory ‘so that even one of the men to come might shudder to wrong a host who provides friendship’ (*Il*. 3.351–4). The prayer to Apollo by the wounded Glaukos for immediate aid (*Il*. 16.514–26; trans. Lattimore 2011) is a good example of how epic uses expansion to turn a simple request into a more vivid episode: calling on the god to listen ‘somewhere in the rich Lykian countryside or here in Troy’, Glaukos details the crisis (‘my blood is not able to dry and stop running, my shoulder is aching beneath it, I cannot hold my spear up steady’), informs Apollo of Sarpedon’s death, and requests healing so that he may rouse his Lykian comrades to recover the corpse.

Incongruous as such lengthy self-diagnosis might seem from someone in pain on the field, the prayer nevertheless convinces the audience of the seriousness of Glaukos’ wound, sums up the plot, and foreshadows the next phase of battle, even as it affirms Apollo’s constant support for the Trojans. It well illustrates epic’s interweaving of characterization, exposition, and religion, through the device of speech directed to the gods.

At times, the request for immediate intervention is accompanied by a vow to repay the god later. Thus, Pandaros, encouraged by the disguised Athena, includes in his prayer to Apollo a promise to sacrifice a hecatomb of firstling lambs on his return home to Zeleia (*Il*. 4.119–21). At other times, such a vow is accompanied by a material sign of dedication, as a promise of future sacrifice once the outcome is assured. An especially

elaborate scene with this structure comes when the priestess Theano leads the women of Troy to the Temple of Athena to place a robe (*peplos*) on the lap of the goddess' statue, with a ritual cry (*Il*. 6.297–311). The request that Athena stop the enemy warrior Diomedes is followed by a promise to dedicate twelve heifers 'immediately' (*autika nun, Il*. 6.308). This Athena denies (*Il*. 6.311), though it is unclear whether her statue makes a gesture of the head, or the listening audience (not the Trojan women) simply realizes her refusal. The offering scene has reminded some of a parallel in the Athenian ritual year, the offering of a *peplos* to the city's patron goddess during the Panathenaia festival. This apparent correspondence, however, rather than being a straightforward injection into epic of one 'actual' event, is better understood as a multilayered evocation of cultural practices involving weaving, women, and celebration (Nagy 2012: 266–72).

It is psychologically apt that Homeric prayers occur when mortals need divine help to influence forces beyond their control. The natural bias towards the future, in wishes that point gods towards a certain course of action, is balanced in many prayers by reference to the speakers' ritual piety in the past. Penelope prays to Athena that her son Telemachus safely escape the suitors, while reminding the goddess of her husband's past sacrifices of heifers and sheep *(Od*. 4.761–6). This 'reminder', a frequent convention in both literary and non-poetic prayers, takes on new vividness in Penelope's version as she plays on the sound shared by the verb *mnesai* ('be mindful', 4.765) and the noun *mnesteras* ('suitors') in the next line (*Od*. 4.766). Poetic creativity at the level of character-speech not only underlines the essential basis for her request, but also affirms her reputation for clever inventiveness.

The entire *Iliad* is put into motion by a similar act of parental prayer, when the priest Chryses seeks the return of his daughter, taken as a prize of war for Agamemnon. Beseeching the commanders, Chryses frames his supplication with a wish that the Olympian gods grant the destruction of Troy and departure of the besiegers, followed by an admonishment to revere the god Apollo (whose sceptre, with its ritual fillets, he bears as a sign of office). Roughly dismissed by Agamemnon, the old man calls on his patron god. His invocation, adorned with the god's titles and named sanctuaries, recalls his past worship—the building of a shrine and offerings of bulls and goats—but is focused on the future: 'through your

arrows, let the Danaans pay back my tears' (*Il*. 1.35–42). The subsequent plague leads to the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, the latter's withdrawal, the supplication of Zeus by Thetis (*Il*. 1.502–10), the crushing loss of warriors on both sides, and, finally, another old man's supplication for *his* child's return (Priam for Hektor's corpse).

In their epic deployment, then, prayers mark moods and predict narrative trajectories. The motif of vengeance fits especially well with prayer; once stated by an aggrieved party and approved by a god, the desired payback becomes a poetic goal, as the audience knows the final outcome, although not the exact method by which it will be achieved. Polyphemus the Cyclops, blinded by Odysseus, prays to his father Poseidon for vengeance, mentioning two narrative options—either that his enemy never get home, or that he makes it back to Ithaka late, with no crew, and embroiled in domestic strife (*Od*. 9.528–36). The latter happens, as had been predicted by the Ithakan prophet Halitherses (*Od*. 2.171–6). Such parallels between prayer and prophecy highlight the close relationship among mortal desires, divine plans, and the abilities of some humans to articulate the future. The vengeance motif gains more persuasive authority each time an audience hears of another application, and thus guides listeners' expectations. The reverse of the interaction between Poseidon and his son Polyphemos is narrated by Phoenix, as part of his appeal to Achilles in the Embassy scene (*Il*. 9.447–57). As Phoenix recounts the event that led to his eventual role as Achilles' guardian, we are reminded of the essential similarity between praying and cursing. (In Greek, the latter verb is a prefixed form of the former: *kataraomai* 'curse; pray against' vs. *araomai* 'pray'; see also, in this volume, Versnel, Chapter 30.) For alienating the affections of his father's concubine, Phoenix was condemned by his father's curse (abetted by Zeus and Persephone) to be childless. (A similar parental curse featured in the lost epic *Thebaid*: fr. 2 West.) In sum, the representation of Homeric prayers as almost always successfully fulfilled primes the listeners of epic for predictable results. The totality of such recurrent plot events—shown or recollected, narrated by the poet or the characters—crystallizes into a form of belief. Epic thereby regulates the religious imagination.

Conditionally cursing oneself is the core action within oath-taking. Two key scenes in the *Iliad* represent this ceremony in elaborate detail (Kitts 2005). Comparisons with ancient Near Eastern sources make it plausible

that the epic here captures the features of actually occurring ritual (whether contemporary or historical). In each scene, the accompanying prayer is highly developed. Before the duel of Menelaus and Paris, Agamemnon calls on Zeus ‘ruling from Ida, greatest most glorious’, the sun Helios, rivers, the earth, and (euphemistically) ‘those who take vengeance in the underworld on oath-breakers’, before setting out in precise legal detail the binding conditions under which the fight will take place and the consequences for either side, Greeks and Trojans (*Il*. 3.275–300). Anonymous warriors on both sides add a prayer that oath-breakers should be killed, their brains flowing out like the wine poured in libation. When Achilles is ready to return to the war, Agamemnon carries out his second oath ritual, this time invoking the same divinities (and explicitly naming the Furies) to attest to the fact that he did not violate Achilles’ war-bride Briseis (*Il*. 19.255–65). Unlike the epic appropriation of prayer format elsewhere for exposition and characterization, these two examples offer cases where dictional elaboration, rather than doing aesthetic work, instead provides the specificity that one would require in a performative utterance with social consequences for the real world.

Realistic as prayer and related rituals appear to be within early Greek epic, one key factor separates fictional representations from actual experience: the point of view available to an omniscient narrator. Through the technique of juxtaposition, the poet can, without further comment, produce for an audience effects of suspense, characterization, and distancing that are clearly different from what the fictive participants experience within the poem. Early in the *Iliad*, a clear example arises when an elite group is summoned by Agamemnon to sacrifice to Zeus a 5-year-old ox (*Il*. 2.402–18). The commander prays to cast down Priam’s palace and slay Hektor before the sun sets that day. The narrator’s point of view intervenes, however, to present a different perspective: ‘He spoke, but none of this was the son of Kronos yet authorizing; he accepted the holy victims, but was adding to the dire hardship’ (*Il*. 2.419–20). The narrative tailpiece to the prayer is thus more in tune with the brief but brilliant lines that occur just before Agamemnon initiates his exclusive sacrifice, and that provide yet another angle of vision. Ordinary fighters cook their own dinners among the ships, ‘each man sacrificing to one or another of the eternal gods/praying to evade death and the grind of Ares’ (*Il*. 2.400–1). With grim irony, Agamemnon’s overconfident prayer for

conquest contrasts with the words of anonymous soldiers who wish merely to survive.

Perhaps the most intricate of such complex contrastive scenarios is that which pairs prayers by Penelope and Odysseus, after their first meeting in twenty years (*Od*. 20.60–90). Unaware (apparently) that she spoke with her husband the previous night, Penelope, in tears, prays to Artemis to be killed instantly or swept off by a blast of wind, as once were the daughters of Pandareus, rather than marry a lesser man. Odysseus, hearing his wife's laments, begs Zeus for a double omen (*Od*. 20.98–101), verbal and visual (*pheme* and *teras*). Zeus obliges: his flash of lightning prompts a serving woman nearby to pray that the suitors die on this day (*Od*. 20.102–21). As in the *Iliad* scene of multiple prayers, the poet here voices three points of view within a short compass. Once again, there is a subtle balance between rite and literary application. On one hand, Odysseus carries out what was most likely a standard divinatory practice (cledonomancy, or praying for omens), one possibly having an Archaic heritage. (The employment of an ox-hide recalls the medieval Irish *tarbfheis* divination rite (MacKillop 2006: 56–8) used to determine the identity of a new king.) On the other, the poet has incorporated his ritual prayer into a larger compositional unit full of poignancy and suspense.

Are these patterns purely poetic convention? Since the bulk of our testimony, even from later periods, also comes from poetry, it is difficult to answer. But ancient works that at least purport to record or comment on contemporary events (the plays of Aristophanes, the histories of Herodotos, Thucydides, and Xenophon, Plato's dialogues, and Athenian oratory) confirm that the basic structures of Homeric prayer might still have been heard in real society during the Classical period. What the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* do describe, which later works largely screen out, are the lineaments of beliefs: the immediacy of divine action; the general efficacy (but also failure) of prayer and sacrifice when gods have other designs; the moments in which prayer is suitable; and the assumption that all people in situations of stress depend on the gods (as the young Peisistratus asserts at *Od*. 3.48). The sort of 'thick description' that the ethnographer of religious practices in real situations has to observe or elicit is put on display—albeit in stylized poetic form—in the social interactions we see through epic. While it remains true that a fictional narrative is driving such theological speculation, it would be hazardous to assume that Greeks of the Archaic

period did *not* invest belief in their poetic traditions, or did not accommodate their daily lives to some approximation of the religious imaginary therein.

GODS AND SONGS

When the elderly Phoenix wants to persuade Achilles to re-enter the fight before Troy, he employs (among other strategies) an allegory about personified prayers of supplication, the Litai (*Il*. 9.502–14). Describing them as lame and aged daughters of Zeus, who slowly follow in the path of Ruin, to heal its victims, the old man observes that the Litai also punish those who refuse them (and thus implies Achilles should heed his own supplications). This vignette of a character employing an unabashed religious fiction offers a valuable counterpoint for the rhetoric of the *Iliad* itself. Unlike Phoenix, the poet does not construct personifications of the divine that then act according to some limited plot line, the purpose of which is to illustrate a moral or ethical truth (how supplication works, for example). In fact, the *Iliad* commands attention precisely because it is *not* a didactic epic. The very act of supplication, which runs through it like a spine, is constantly questioned, nuanced, or held in suspense until, ironically, Achilles himself, meeting with the suppliant Priam, tells the old man a didactic story (the tale of Niobe: *Il*. 24.601–20) before returning Hektor's corpse. Unlike allegory, Homeric poetry creates three-dimensional, believable figures with individual characteristics, from the quarrelling Zeus and Hera to the errant Aphrodite. Nevertheless, as early as the sixth century BCE, allegorical interpretation was applied to Homeric poetry, as we learn from ancient testimonia about Theagenes of Rhegion, who read the Battle of the Gods episode in the *Iliad* as a clash among the personified elements of fire, water, and air (Ford 2003: 68–76). Homer's status as 'theologian' dominated late antique discussions (Lamberton 1989). Without adopting this influential mode, we must still acknowledge that epic, at the macro level, sets itself up as a sort of privileged communication between a poet and the gods, in particular between an inspired singer (*aoidos*) and the Muses or Apollo. It is thus a religious, and

probably ‘ritual’, act, both for composers and their audiences. Cult festivals—the most likely setting for Homeric performances—would have reinforced the religious framing (as with Athenian drama, performed in ritual conditions within the precincts of Dionysos). We should take this framing conceit at face value, but also should expand it by examining the variety of divine–mortal communications in the poems, especially those mediated by prophetic figures. In this way, a fuller realization can be achieved concerning the genre’s self-positioning as narrative sent by gods.

Hesiod’s *Theogony* gives the most elaborate depiction of divine sources of poetic information. The Muses visit and inspire the bard, and command that he sing of them, their father Zeus, and all the immortals, just as the Muses themselves eternally commemorate their divine relations (*Theog*. 1–34). His role therefore borders on that of the seer, both as one who has seen goddesses in person, and one who knows all that will be and that was (*Theog*. 32). The proems of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* represent a poet–divinity transaction in shorter form. The narrator calls on an unnamed ‘goddess’ in the first line of the *Iliad* to ‘sing the wrath of Achilles son of Peleus’, asking specifically which of the gods joined the hero in strife with Agamemnon, and then immediately providing (or ventriloquizing?) the answer: Apollo. The opening thus makes a request to one god for information about another, and the narration unwinds from this naming of divine origin. The *Odyssey* poet, by contrast, names the goddess from whom he seeks information (*Mousa*, *Od*. 1.1), asks to be told in detail (*ennepe*) rather than for a song, but keeps his protagonist hero unnamed for another twenty lines. Unlike the *Iliad* proem, a god’s action is mentioned in the *Odyssey*’s (Helios annihilated the crew members who devoured his cattle), and the introductory segment closes with more detail about the transaction in progress: the Muse is additionally invoked as ‘goddess, daughter of Zeus’ and asked to tell the tale from whichever point she chooses. As in the *Iliad*, here too the storyline is immediately tied directly to divinities: Athena, who approaches Zeus on behalf of her favourite, Odysseus, now that Poseidon has left for a feast among the Aithiopians.

Both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* provide more details about the divine role in epic composition. When the *Iliad* poet begins the extensive Catalogue of Ships, he calls on the Olympian Muses to ‘bring to mind’ (*mnesaiath’*, *Il*. 2.492) the names and numbers that, left to his own devices and physical

capacity, he could neither recall nor narrate. It is their immortal existence, as opposed to distant, mortal ephemerality, that forces the poet to call on their collective memory, ‘for you are goddesses and you are present and know all, while we hear only the fame (*kleos*) and know not a thing’ (*Il*. 2.485–6). This concise summary of epic poetics is also a theological statement built upon on the essential and stark contrast running throughout Greek thinking about the relative strength of gods and mortals.

The *Odyssey*’s depictions of two bards—Phemios in Ithaka and Demodokos among the Phaiakians—contain several further hints about the key role of divinity. Penelope specifies the local poet’s repertoire as comprising ‘works of gods and humans’ (*Od*. 1.338) when she attempts to make Phemios change his tune, while her son’s spirited defence of the poet’s current rendition (the ill-fated return of the Achaians from Troy) mentions the gods only as the ultimate cause of the sorrowful events narrated (*Od*. 1.346–52). The blind Demodokos, beloved of the Muse (*Od*. 8.63) is moved by her directly to sing glorious deeds of men (*Od*. 8.73). When he tells the less respectable stories of gods (the adultery of Ares and Aphrodite) the bard is conspicuously *not* said to be guided by the goddess of song (*Od*. 8.266). Odysseus, who himself tells stories like a bard, praises the entire race of poets as beloved of the Muse, who instructs them in the ways of song (*Od*. 8.480–1); slightly later he envisions the possibility that Apollo taught Demodokos (*Od*. 8.488). Towards the end of the poem, Phemios supplicates the raging Odysseus with a veiled warning that to kill him would bring suffering, because he sings to gods and morals, and, though self-taught, yet draws on the ways of song that a god ‘has planted in my mind’ (*Od*. 22.345–8). The intervention of Telemachus to save Phemios prevents us from discovering whether his further argument, that he is fit to sing to Odysseus ‘as to a god’—(*Od*. 22.348–9) had persuasive force. But that the bard could venture it suggests how epic and personal praise poetry for mortals in the form of hymns were closely related performance registers.

The notion of divine inspiration extends beyond poets to all who show some special talent, such as carpenters (*Il*. 5.60–3). Athena (as Mentor) generalizes the principle that a divinity provides assistance at need to those who are already in some way promising (*Od*. 3.25–8). But, in epic, the other major category of inspired actors is prophets (including readers of bird signs and other diviners), like the seer Kalchas, who guided the

Greeks to Troy and owed his craft to Apollo (*Il*. 1.72). One of the interesting realistic devices of Homeric poetry is its refusal to impose one prophetic point of view, as we have seen in the case of prayers. The contestation over interpretation of signs often becomes the main point of a scene. For instance, when Telemachus has vowed vengeance against the suitors and Zeus sends as confirmation two fighting eagles, the aged seer Halitherses warns that Odysseus is on his way home (*Od*. 2.157–76). The suitor Eurymachos dismisses this on the grounds that not all bird signs are 'fateful' (*enaisimoi*). Like Agamemnon, who similarly scorns a prophet in the beginning of the *Iliad*, Eurymachos eventually meets a bad end (in his case, shot down by Odysseus). An audience is thus forced to withhold judgement about the immediate contest of interpretations until the plot winds up. Such scenes demonstrate that, at least in the Homeric imaginary, one could dispute the workings of the whole semiotic system, or whether the notion of signs (of special bird signs, or the sound of thunder, etc.) is even operative. The challenge of Eurymachos is not to offer an alternative explanation, but to question the very basis of interpretation.

The most famous scenario of contested interpretation occurs at *Il*. 12.195–250 when Hektor, leading a charge against the Achaian wall, sees an eagle drop a snake it has just killed among the troops. His brother, Polydamas the seer, tries to dissuade him from the attack: the Trojans might fail, just as the snake failed to bring home its prey. Hektor lashes out (*Il*. 12.233), insisting that Zeus is on their side, and adding the oft-quoted line 'one bird of omen is best—to defend the fatherland' (*Il*. 12.243). Ironically, the audience does know that the 'will of Zeus' tilts towards honouring Achilles. The episode therefore presents an arresting characterization of different ways of being: not that of the 'religious' versus the 'rational' man, as has often been propounded, but between men voicing competing brands of theological semiosis. Which signs one relies on are open to dispute, as is the authority by which mortals know the will of Zeus.

Paradoxically, the Homeric audience does know the god's will, because it hears the voice of the poet. It is significant that the only means of mantic communication within Homeric epic that is never questioned is that based on direct voices from gods, unmediated by readers of signs that are exposed to interpretive disputation. When Helenos overhears Apollo and Athena agreeing to encourage a duel, and relays this information to his

brother Hektor, nobody questions his veracity (*Il*. 77.37–53). The activity of Helenos is iconic for the activity of the Archaic poets, who present us with the dialogues of the gods, as if directly and intimately overheard. Homer and Hesiod frame their poems as representing what they have apprehended from the gods, via the Muses. This carries more meaning than a literary conceit.

CONCLUSION

Epic balances the heroic size and uniqueness of some rituals (Nestor's and Achilles') with the ordinary circumstances and rhetoric of others (prayers). The occurrence of both types in the poems—the 'heroic' but also the 'demotic'—should not be taken as an awkward compromise. Rather, we might understand this double aspect as metonymic for the complementary blending of elements that occurs naturally in any set of religious practices and beliefs, ancient or modern. Greek epic is neither a transparent window onto Archaic beliefs, nor a fascinating, unreal entertainment. Overall, if we follow the definition of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, 'epic' religion is itself a valid variety of religion: a 'system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic' (Geertz 1966: 4).

SUGGESTED READING

On religion in Homer, Burkert 1985: esp. 119–89, still provides a good starting point. Kearns 2004 offers an overview of more recent work. Gould 1985 contextualizes poetic depictions within a wider analysis of Greek practices as does Price 1999: esp. 11–46. Nagy 1999 is a detailed study of heroes in cult and poetry. Burgess 2001 provides a full analysis of the Cyclic epics. Crotty 1994 studies the poetics of supplication ritual in epic.

Muellner 1976 is an essential semantic analysis of the workings of Homeric 'prayer'. Segal 1994 discusses bardic inspiration, as does, more broadly, Murray 1996. On Hesiod's religious thought, see Strauss Clay 2003.

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CHAPTER 12

ART AND IMAGERY

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IN the Temple of Athena at Troy stood the image of the goddess. So says Homer's *Iliad* in an impressive episode (6.297). This image is visited by the Trojan women, under the leadership of Queen Hekabe and the priestess Theano, and receives a precious gift. They lay a splendid garment 'on her knees' and beg the statue for deliverance from the perils of war, but the goddess 'nods refusal'. The image of Athena at Troy is obviously a statue of anthropomorphic form, although this is not stated. Access to the image, and therefore its visibility, is restricted: the priestess keeps the key to the temple, and controls access.

To what extent did the women (and naturally also the men) of Classical Athens feel themselves directly addressed when they heard this tale—for instance, on the occasion of the rhapsodes' performance at the Great Panathenaia (Pl. *Ion* 530b; cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: 284–307)? Did it seem to them representative of their own experience of the depiction of the divine in the context of private and civic space? To what degree did the scenario correspond to the expectations and ritual customs that accompanied the depiction of the divine in contemporary Athens (cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: 307–11, see also, in this volume, Platt, Chapter 33)? Which forms of this visualization were familiar to an Athenian audience from their own environment (Gaifman 2006)? Did the Trojan

women's dealings with the image of the goddess in the temple strike the Athenians as a useful way of obtaining their request? Was the presence of the divine a prerequisite for the granting of their plea (for the different theories regarding religious perception cf. Eich 2011: 56–92)?

My remarks will focus on Athens as a particularly important example. The extant sources do not suggest that the citizens of the other Greek poleis like Tegea, Corinth, or Syracuse acted differently in dealing with the images of the gods.

DIVINE IMAGES IN THE *OIKOS* AND IN PUBLIC SPACE

The form of the gods was imparted to the Athenians in word and image from their childhood: even wet nurses, according to Plato in the fourth century BCE, would tell stories and myths to children (*Laws* 887d). With the acquisition of language came the knowledge of traditional tales, whose protagonists were gods and heroes. These tales could also be absorbed visually in many Athenian households: inside the home, Athenians could have their first encounters with images of the gods. The appearance and deeds of the gods were represented on many thousands of Attic vases, from *c*.650 BCE in black figure and from 530/25 BCE mostly in red figure. On wine and water vessels, drinking cups, and various containers for household supplies, myths and images of the gods came into the Athenian home (Gaifman 2006: 264–6; Platt 2011: 93–6). The vase painters confirmed what was made clear in the mythic tales: the gods, in their visible forms, were not restricted to natural human shapes. Hermes, for example, was depicted in vase paintings not only as a handsome young man, as in Homeric epic, but in the shape of a herm, a pillar whose only anthropomorphic elements were the head of a bearded man with an Archaic hairstyle and a phallus (Siebert 1990). But the meaning of vase paintings as visualizations of the divine in private space can be reconstructed only with difficulty. The literary sources scarcely mention this sort of painting, so our knowledge of the nature and manner of its

reception must rest on conjecture (for the different interpretations cf. Schmidt and Stähli 2012).

It is hard to say to what extent children came into contact with visual representations of the gods in the context of the domestic family cult. The 'ancestral gods' of a family were evidently conceived of as tangible and concrete—otherwise it is hard to explain why the Athenian Leokrates, in the fourth century BCE, incurred the reproach of having betrayed his fatherland because he left Athens after the Battle of Chaironeia and had his household gods sent on to Megara (Lycurg, *Leoc*. 25; Scheer 2000: 226–7). But the children of the Athenians may certainly have learned from family rituals that pictorial or even anthropomorphic representations of the gods were not absolutely necessary for cultic worship. Hestia, for instance, was worshipped at the hearth without an image, and Zeus Ktesios, who guarded household property, may have been embodied only by a bulbous earthenware vessel (Ath. 11.473b; Parker 2005: 19; Gaifman 2012: 126).

The first three-dimensional images of the gods encountered by Athenian citizens in public spaces probably did not represent the goddess Athena. Instead, it was Hermes who stood before the entrances of houses (Ar. *Plut*. 1153) and at street corners, in the partly human representation of the herm. The Athenians felt the four-sided Hermes pillars to be particularly typical of their city (Thuc. 6.27; Gaifman 2012: 66).

The great number of the herms, as well as their proximity to houses and the free access to them, may have contributed to their popularity, which is also reflected in their occurrence in vase paintings (see, in this volume, Dillon, Chapter 17). Passers-by and people on their way home are shown in confidential talk or physical contact with herms, whose age can evidently even be adapted to the people facing them (Ar. *Nub*. 1479–81; Zanker 1965: 95; Siebert 1990: no. 105, 141; similarly also Steiner 2001: 134). The Athenians' indignation at the mutilation of the herms during the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 6.27; cf. Lys. 6.11; Osborne 1985; Parker 1996: 80–2; Scheer 2000: 234–9) is also attributable to the fairly close connection that every individual had established from childhood with this sort of statue.

The prevalence of herms was one indication of how strongly the space of the city was marked by depictions of the divine. Anyone going out of his house saw a herm in front of him, and anyone coming overland to

Athens was accompanied by herms that the tyrant Hipparchos is supposed to have had erected between the Attic demes and the *agora* in the sixth century BCE (Pl. *Hipparch*. 228c–229a; Rückert 1998: 57–8; Crawley Quinn 2007: 93–5). And the herm was only one of a dense net of images of various gods that covered the city. The Athenians' access to images of Athena, in comparison to the herms, was quite restricted: as in epic Troy, the statues of the city's goddess were to be found especially on the Acropolis and within sanctuaries. But from the fifth century BCE onwards, anyone rounding Cape Sounion in a ship likewise saw the spearpoint of the monumental bronze statue of Athena on the Acropolis glinting in the sun (Paus. 1.28.2), a sight that must also have attracted the glance of everyone who looked upwards in the city itself (Gill 2001: 270). The designation of this statue as 'Athena *Promachos*' is first attested much later, in the fourth century CE (Schol. Dem. 22.13). The detail of the shining spearpoint, however, evoked the statue of Athena, as well as associations with the totality of other images of Athena in the city and on the Acropolis: the goddess, visible to all, dominated the city.

On the occasion of public festivals, the ubiquity of depictions of the various gods in public spaces was impressed upon all residents of the Athenian polis. In the Panathenaic procession, for example, young girls acting as *kanephorai* (basket bearers) and young men of military age on horseback escorted the *peplos* for Athena (Neils 1996a: 185; Parker 2005: 263–4; Connelly 2007: 33–9). Just as at Troy, the goddess of the city received a garment as a gift.

The Panathenaic Way led the girls and youths past the image of Athena in the Temple of Hephaistos, and they encountered both the herms in the *agora* (Ath. 4.167; Paus. 1.15.1; Rückert 1998: 74, 88) and the statue of Hermes Propylaios on the ascent of the Acropolis (Paus. 1.22.8; Rückert 1998: 65). On the Acropolis they were greeted by the colossal, 9 metre-high bronze statue of Athena Promachos, whose spearpoint they had, until then, perhaps seen only from below. Here, innumerable private and public votive offerings—votive reliefs, statues, statuettes, painted clay tablets, and so on—recalled the form of Athena and other gods (Keesling 2003; and generally on the meaning of the votive offerings, Kindt 2012: 64–7). At the same time, the rear tympanum of the Parthenon was visible, evoking the image of Athena and her deeds for the city. During the festival of the goddess, the doors of the temples stood open and allowed the temple

images on the Acropolis to be seen—these too differing greatly from one another in shape, size, material, and age. In contrast to the situation in mythical Troy, there stood on the Athenian Acropolis not one image of the goddess, but many.

CONCRETE CONTEXTS OF VISUALIZATION: THE ATHENA POLIAS, THE PALLADION, AND THE ATHENA PARTHENOS

From this multiplicity, two statues of the civic goddess particularly stood out: the so-called Athena Polias and the Athena in the Parthenon. These two famous images make clear the methodological difficulties of reconstructing the contexts, the perception, and finally the religious meaning of divine images in Athens, and indeed in Greek culture as a whole. The statues themselves—and this is true of the overwhelming majority of divine images in Greece—have not survived. The literary references prove to be fragmentary, ambiguous, and chronologically late.

Pausanias describes the Athena Polias as the holiest object of the Athenians (Paus. 1.26.6). But every detail of the image's context turns out to be controversial, including its appearance, its origin, and its location on the Acropolis. The statue apparently was made of olive wood (Schol. Dem. 22.13). Its size is unclear (for discussion, see Herington 1955; Romano 1980: 47; Kroll 1982; Mansfield 1985: 135–88). Nor is it even certain if the goddess was depicted sitting or standing. Accordingly, it cannot be determined if other images of Athena on the Acropolis, either 'seated' terracotta statuettes or 'standing' marble statues, may have referenced this image of Athena (cf. Demargne 1984: nos 15–25; Ridgway 1992: 122). The statue wore clothes and jewellery (Kroll 1982: 68). In the fifth century BCE it seems to have held an owl in one hand and an offering bowl in the other (Ridgway 1992: 120–1; Lapatin 2001: 78). It is uncertain, however, when these attributes were added.

The stories of its origin also indicate that the aesthetic qualities of this image were not very important: it is not attributed to a sculptor. On the contrary, it was the lack of a human creator that emphasized the importance of the statue. But even the ancient sources disagree on its provenance: it is said to have been erected by the Athenian kings Erichthonios (Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.14.6) or Kekrops (Euseb. *Praep. evang*. 10.9.22). Pausanias even reported that the statue had fallen from the sky in ancient times (Paus. 1.26.6). It is probable that, in the fifth/fourth century BCE, it was, in fact, already a very old wooden image, which was evacuated to the Athenians' ships during the Persian Wars (Scheer 2000: 215–18). But this is not explicitly stated in the sources. The location of this image cannot be completely reconstructed either. At the end of the fifth century BCE, the statue stood in what is now known as the Erechtheion, which served as successor to the old Temple of Athena, that was destroyed or at least severely damaged in the Persian Wars. It is not certain where it was stored in the over fifty years between the Persian invasion and the completion of the Erechtheion in the last quarter of the fifth century BCE (on the topographical uncertainties, see Ridgway 1992: 124; Harris 1996: 202–4).

The religious contextualization of this image is difficult. It certainly seems that this statue was the recipient of the *peplos*, but the reconstruction of this ritual devotion to the statue raises questions. It is not clear from the sources whether the ceremonial gift of a garment was given only every four years at the Great Panathenaia (Parker 2005: 265) or also in the intervening years, on the occasion of the Lesser Panathenaia (Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: 267). Indications that the *peplos* for Athena was presented in the Panathenaic procession as the sail of a ship have reinforced the suspicion that it was too large for the ancient—and hence small—wooden statue. Therefore, the latter could not have been clothed in the Panathenaic *peplos*, but would have required another, smaller garment (Mansfield 1985: 43–5; Barber 1992: 113–14). Only this smaller *peplos*, then, would have been woven by the Athenian women, while paid male artisans must have made the true Panathenaic *peplos* (Mansfield 1985: 54). But the size of the statue is also unknown; nor is the size of the wheeled ship certain. Therefore, an oversized *peplos* for the statue of the goddess remains hypothetical (for discussion, see also Reuthner 2006: 322).

Finally, it is unclear whether the image of Athena Polias really wore the Panathenaic *peplos* at all, or whether the garment was, as in the Homeric phrase, merely 'laid on its knees' (Hom. *Il*. 6.273). In any case, a robing of the image did not take place immediately, but is conceivable only within the framework of another festival, the Plynteria, which took place ten months after the Panathenaia (Parke 1977: 38–41; Neils 1996a: 185; cautiously Romano 1980: 51). This second ritual context, in which the old wooden image of Athena on the Acropolis played a role, also gives an example of the difficulties caused by the material. By tradition, women from the family of the Praxiergidai were responsible for carrying out the ritual (*IG* I^3 7; Romano 1980: 47–9; Neils 1996a: 185). Once a year the Polias was taken from its base, clothed and cleaned. The day of the Plynteria was considered a day of bad omen, probably because the image of the goddess was not in its place (Xen. *Hell*. 1.4.12; Plut. *Alc*. 34.1; Scheer 2000: 59). To the question of whether the goddess wore only a cleaned dress or a new one, the sources give as little answer as to the broader question of whether this garment was the actual Panathenaic *peplos* (Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: 150 n. 51, 158). Philochoros (*FGrH* 328 F64b from the third century BCE) and inscriptions from the second century BCE (*IG* II^2 1006.11–12; *IG* II^2 1008.9–10; *IG* II^2 1011.10–11) report the procession of an image of Athena to Phaleron on the sea, with the participation of the ephebes. Whether this information relates to the image of Athena Polias is controversial: the procession is either connected with above-mentioned Plynteria for Athena Polias (Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: 159; probably so, according to Parker 2005: 478, while Romano 1980: 49–50 is sceptical) or, according to another hypothesis, this ritual was for the Athenian Palladion (Mansfield 1985: 424–33; Robertson 1996b: 33, 389–91). This brings up another image of Athena, whose possession was apparently claimed by the Athenians: Athenian judges met in cases of accidental manslaughter '*epi Palladio*', at the Palladion (Arist. (*Ath. Pol*.) 57.3; Paus. 1.28.8; Ael. *VH* 5.15). Beyond its own venerable and precious images of Athena on the Acropolis, the city of Athens wished apparently to possess also, in the Palladion, the most famous image of Athena in Greek history (Demargne 1984: nos 67–117; Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: 246–62). Such a claim made the connection with Troy direct: the Palladion —as the Epic Cycle states (*Iliupersis* fr. 1 Allen = Dionysios Hal., *Ant*. 1.68, 2–69; Bettinetti 2001: 71–3)—is said to have been a gift from Zeus

to the Trojans, and had guaranteed the safety of Troy for ages. Originally it had fallen from heaven, as the Athena Polias had supposedly fallen to the Athenian Acropolis. Only after Odysseus and Diomedes stole the Palladion could Troy be conquered. Attic vase paintings of the fifth century BCE attest to knowledge of the Palladion myths in Classical Athens (Platt 2011: 93–5; Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: 241). But making the presence of this divine image believable in Athens—it was also claimed by cities such as Argos, Sparta, and later Rome (Paus. 2.23.5; Faraone 1992: 7; Scheer 2000: 91)—required substantial adjustments in the mythological tradition: either the Athenians had received the Palladion already in Troy, or, on their way home from Troy, Diomedes and his Argives accidentally landed on the coast of Attica, considered it enemy territory, and attacked it. In defending his country, the Athenian king Damophon forcibly took the Palladion from the Argives (Schol. Dem. 23.71; Paus. 1.28.9; Bettinetti 2001: 74).

In any case, this image did not stand on the Acropolis. The location of the '*epi Palladio*' law court has yet to be identified; the still uncertainly located 'Temple on the Ilissos' (Krumme 1993: 213–27; Robertson 1996b: 392–408) has been proposed as a possible site for the Palladion. It is unclear whether, when, and how an Athenian Palladion was made accessible to the citizens, whether it was already an object in that procession of the ephebes to Phaleron in Classical times, and whether it received other cultic honours and was cared for by special cultic personnel (Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: 246). In this case, late literary sources connect Athens with a foreign divine image with the potential to overshadow the locally most important local depiction of the city goddess, the image of Athena Polias. But this did not happen. It cannot be ruled out that the claim to the Trojan Palladion was mostly a matter of mythographical construction and was not really reflected in the religious life of Classical Athens.

In its immediate neighbourhood another divine image competed with the old wooden statue of the Polias: the gold and ivory Athena of Pheidias, the most materially precious divine image in Athens and perhaps the most impressive of all representations of Athena. This statue does not survive either, but on the basis of copies and coin images an idea of its appearance can be reconstructed (Demargne 1984: nos 20–2; Nick 2002: 177–205). The gold and ivory colossus was 12 metres high (Plin. *HN* 36–18; Paus.

1.24.5–7; Lapatin 2001: 62–78). At least forty talents of gold, in the form of removable gold plates, were used for the dress of the goddess (Thuc, 2.13.5; Lapatin 2001: 64), and her flesh consisted of ivory over a wooden core. The goddess was represented standing with her weapons, with a statue of Nike in her hand and a shield set on the ground beside her. The relief on the shield referred once again to Athenian prehistory, showing Theseus, king of Attica, in heroic times, defeating the Amazons who were said to have attached Athens (Lapatin 2001: 66, with references). This monumental image also stood on the Acropolis, in the Parthenon. The base of the statue has survived, and thus its location is known. A pool of water in front of the statue created a constant humidity (Paus. 5.11.10) that helped protect the delicate material and reflected the sheen of the gold (Steiner 2001: 102).

The Athena in the Parthenon differed from the old image of the Polias not only in appearance, but also in origin. While the provenance of the wooden image is lost in the mists of history, the divine images of the fifth century BCE came into being through the involvement of the citizens. The gold and ivory image in the Parthenon was probably financed by order of the Athenian assembly as a gift of thanks to the goddess for victory in the Persian Wars. Building accounts show expenditures for production of the statue in the years 447–438 (*IG* I^3 436–51, 453–60; Lapatin 2001: 64). This image was conspicuous for its tremendous material value and prompted the suspicion that there had been financial irregularities in its manufacture: sources suggest that the sculptor Pheidias was accused of embezzling ivory during the making of the image (Schol. Ar. *Pax* 605; *FGrH* III B, 328 F 121 (Philochoros); cf. Plut. *Per*. 31.2–3; Platt 2011: 108–9).

COMPETITION AMONG IMAGES AND HIERARCHIES OF MEANING

While the Trojan women of the epic-mythological tale entered a temple in which there was a single image of Athena, the Athenians of Classical

times were confronted with a wealth of pictorial representations, including the Athena Nike and the Athena 'Lemnia', among the other important images of Athena on the Acropolis. Did the Athenians develop criteria for ranking the plethora of representations around them? Are these criteria recognizable in the terminology of the literary sources? How important was the aesthetic success of the images' execution? In short, which image of Athena on the Acropolis was the most important for the women and men of Athens—the Parthenos, glittering with gold, or the wooden statue in the Erechtheion? There can be no simple answer to this question. Programmatic or even normative statements concerning the history of the imagery, the hierarchy of images, or ideas about the relationship of gods and images are largely absent from the written sources.

Perfectly anthropomorphic form was not a decisive criterion for the ranking of a divine image in a 'hierarchy of images'. Only rarely do the ancient sources support the long-held modern theory (Winckelmann 1764: 5–6; cf. Gaifman 2012: 18–28; and, in this volume, Gaifman, Chapter 5) that representation of gods in Greece developed linearly from 'aniconic' images of early times to anthropomorphic imagery in the Classical and Hellenistic worlds. The kernel of this notion is first found in a passage of Pausanias (7.22.4): 'In earlier times, unworked stones were also worshipped as divine statues by all the Greeks.' More recent scholarship (Donohue 1987: e.g. 16–17, 186–7, 227–9; Gaifman 2012: 10) has emphasized how fully anthropomorphic images, satisfying the highest artistic standards, existed alongside aniconic representations of the divine, in both the Classical as well as in the Hellenistic periods. Dissemination of anthropomorphic images of gods brought with it no formal commitment to a (fully) anthropomorphic form: herms are attested as a particularly popular form of imagery in Athens only from the sixth century BCE, not as primitive survivals, but rather as a new form of representation (Steiner 2001: 82). In many cults, direct representation of the divine seems to have been unnecessary to the very end (Gaifman 2012: 32).

Instead, the assignment of importance to an image probably depended on perspective: the artistically modest execution of certain representations —and in this regard the Athena Polias as well as the Palladion is evidence —could be more than offset by the attribution of a miraculous and prestigious past: in the context of the construction of a civic past, the category of 'age' moves to the foreground (cf. also Aesch. *T* 114 Radt =

Porph. *Abst*. 2.18). Particular prestige can be attached to individual visualizations if they have a connection with the mythological narratives of early Greek history, and can serve as visible evidence for the early period of their city and its close connection to the divine (Eich 2011: 340). This does not mean, however, that representations created from precious materials had only a decorative significance. This conclusion has often been drawn by modern scholarship, especially in regard to the gold and ivory image of Athena in the Parthenon, to which there has been a tendency to deny cultic significance (see e.g. Herington 1955; cf. Scheer 2000: 4–5, with references; Lapatin 2001: 78). The source information on this statue actually refers most often to its material, rather than describing cultic rituals (Ar. *Av*. 667–70; *Eq*. 1169–70). But this is not surprising, in view of its unusual size and extravagant materials. Indeed, the scrupulous attitude towards divine images and their role in public exchange among citizens—an attitude not primarily conditioned by aesthetic pleasure—becomes particularly clear in the case of this statue. Plutarch (*Per*. 31.4) tells the anecdote that Pheidias was accused especially because he had secretly depicted himself and Perikles in the Amazon battle reliefs on the shield of the Athena statue. Regardless of this story's historicity, it shows, on the one hand, that important divine images were examined in detail, and, on the other, that civic images of the gods were depictions over whose creation the community wished to exercise control. The statue of Athena in the Parthenon was not to be used as an opportunity for individuals to enrol themselves, literally or figuratively, in the city's history.

Ancient sources, such as Pausanias, mostly took for granted the presence of multiple three-dimensional representations of the same deity in a single sanctuary or even in a single temple (e.g. Paus. 2.17.3; Scheer 2000: 132–6). However, this became a problem in modern times, when scholars began to posit a fundamental qualitative difference between 'cult image' and 'votive offering' among divine images (Scheer 2000: 4–5, with references; Mylonopoulos 2010b: 4–6). In this modern interpretation, the images of Athena on the Acropolis would be divided into cult images on the one hand—that is, images that had their own epithets, stood in a central position in a temple, had their own altar and priest—and votive offerings on the other, which were regarded 'only' as works of art. Accordingly, the wooden Athena Polias and the image of Athena in the Temple of Nike, for example, functioned as cult images, whereas the

monumental bronze statue of the Promachos and the great gold and ivory image in the Parthenon would have belonged to the lesser category. Accordingly—so goes the argument—the statue in the Parthenon would be a votive offering of no real religious significance, a mere work of art, a representation of the city of Athens, a display of power to the allies, even just a repository for gold in the framework of city finances (cf. the late effect of this thesis in Deacy 2008: 111). The Parthenon itself, by this chain of argument, turns out to be a 'treasury', to which the function of a temple is denied (cf. e.g. Preißhofen 1984: 15–17).

For the modern term 'cult image', as defined by the criteria listed above, there is no analogous expression in Greek. The ancient terminology in the literary sources for depictions of the divine can vary according to genre and author (Scheer 2000: 33–4). A passage in Thucydides (2.13.3–4) was obviously a major impetus for the 'cult image versus votive offering' thesis: at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, Perikles considers the possibility that the gold of the Parthenos could be used for the public good in the most pressing necessity of war (Scheer 2000: 168). At a time of particularly vital need, the polis evidently believed itself authorized to borrow from the property of the gods (Scheer 2000: 164–5). But the temple images of Athena do not seem to have been directly subject to such borrowing. Thus, the Athena Parthenos was not merely a repository of gold that was arbitrarily available to the city: in an emergency the removable ornaments of the old wooden statues could also be subject to loans. On the whole, however, the institutions of the polis—and, with them, the totality of the citizens—saw the protection of the divine images as an urgent task: the true value of the images lay not in their material but in their religious powers (Gordon 1979: 24).

Even the alleged ritual deficits of the Athena Parthenos are a matter of perspective: for technical reasons, certain rituals, such as bathing, clothing, or carrying the statue in a procession, could not be performed on the gold and ivory colossus. In this case, the religious images proved to have complementary functions (Lapatin 2001: 78) without necessarily falling into hierarchies. If the citizens of Athens developed criteria for establishing a hierarchy of existing depictions of the divine within the city, these may not have been uniform but dependent on historical period, context, and recipients. A separation into 'cult images' and mere 'votive offerings' was hardly prominent among them. For example, in general, the

Athena Parthenos was seen wholly as an object of ritual attention: the inventories of the fourth century BCE attest to a table for offerings, and thus to ritual activity, in the *cella* (*IG* II^2 1421.112; Harris 1996: 93; Scheer 2000: 139–43; Graf 2001: 230; Platt 2011: 91). However, normally, the temple images were donated as a gift to the deity—they were votive offerings. This connected the Athena Parthenos in the Parthenon with the other images of Athena on the Acropolis. A divine origin—mentioned for the Athena Polias by Pausanias—was the exception for Greek divine images (Graf 1979: 33–41; Scheer 2000: 83–4). But that an especially sacred (and not merely historic) quality arose from the ascription of such an origin (so Bettinetti 2011: 7–10), and that such an origin was ascribed to the images in Classical times, cannot be generalized.

VISUALIZATION AND THE PRESENCE OF THE DIVINE

Divine images were placed in sanctuaries as gifts to the deity, and it was believed that the gods took pleasure in them. This was the original meaning of the term *agalma*, 'showpiece, that which gives joy' (Burkert 1985: 91; Scheer 2000: 33; Kindt 2012: 45). If the importance of Greek divine images varies according to context, there is also a notable lack of normative texts on the question of how the Athenians, and all the Greeks, imagined the relation of the gods to their depictions generally. Did they consider the images as mere aides-memoires, as artistically valuable furnishings of the sanctuaries, or as the gods themselves, who were visible, tangible in space, and possibly accessible through them? The surviving statues do not allow direct conclusions about Greek concepts of identity. At least in public contexts, and beyond the act of solemn installation (*hidrysis*), no use seems to have been made of the possibility of magically animating temple images and thus of artificially establishing an identity for the divinity and image (Hock 1905: 48; Scheer 2000: 111–15; Steiner 2001: 115–18, too optimistically). That statues supposed to have fallen from heaven were thought from the outset to be animated (so

Faraone 1992: 5), or even, as in the ancient Near East, that magical–religious consecration was a requirement for a 'cult image' is not a legitimate generalization.

Since early times—and this is already evident in the epic context—statues could certainly be addressed with the name of the deity represented (Gaifman 2012: 31), or spoken of as 'the goddess' (Romano 1980: 257). Occasionally, there is mention of miracles ascribed to divine images, such as speech, movement, trembling, sweating, and bleeding (Hdt. 7.140; Graf 2001: 238; Steiner 2001: 105). After the theft of a temple statue, it was said that the sanctuary in question 'was abandoned by the goddess' (Paus. 9.33.6). Some elements of prayer and sacrifice, as described in the literary sources, also suggest that the granting of a prayer was considered particularly likely in the presence of the image, and that people sought closeness to the images through sight or touch (Scheer 2000: 66–77; Steiner 2001: 112–13). But ritual acts such as the washing, clothing, and feeding of certain statues were always ambiguous (Scheer 2000: 54–66; Graf 2001: 230–1): it is not clear from the sources whether Athenian rituals were applied directly to a deity thought identical with the image of the Polias or were directed to an invisible goddess 'behind' or beside it (Scheer 2000: 97). People were aware, however, of the images' earthly origin. Apart from the rare cases of 'images fallen from the sky', the statues were traced back to human commissioners and creators (Scheer 2000: 103–8). If an important image of the god was lost, this was an unfavourable sign, but did not necessarily mean that the god had given up the affected city: in the cult context, images of the god were replaceable (Scheer 2010: 235–8). They possessed uniqueness only as works of art or as symbols of civic cultural memory (Scheer 2000: 269; Eich 2011: 356–7).

These ambiguities cannot be placed in any chronologically linear development, in the sense that the Athenians believed in early Archaic times that their Athena Polias was the goddess herself; later, at the end of the fifth century BCE, distanced themselves from such representations, and, finally, in the Hellenistic period, classified the city's divine images as mere works of art under the influence of philosophically conditioned 'enlightenment' (cf. the criticism of Graf 2001: 226; see also Neer 2010: 185–8). Worship and criticism of the images seem rather to have been parallel phenomena from the beginning. Xenophanes of Colophon

provoked his contemporaries in the sixth century BCE with the statement that if cattle were to create images of gods, they would probably have the shape of cattle (DK B 14; B 15), while Heraklitos of Ephesos compared the prayers of his fellow citizens before divine images to a conversation with empty houses (DK F 5; Scheer 2000: 121; Steiner 2001: 121–2). And a class-specific analysis of these contradictions—distinguishing between the 'educated', who would have seen the images only as works of art, and the 'simple folk', who would have identified them with the deities themselves—cannot be verified from the sources (Scheer 2000: 35–43; Graf 2001: 229).

A universal idea of a lasting unity between god and image cannot be proved for Greek culture. The mythological tales emphasized the mobility of the gods. These gods were depicted rather as visitors whose advent made the threshold of their sanctuary tremble and whose presence in the sanctuary was not taken for granted (cf. Callim. *Hymn* 2.1–3; Scheer 2000: 115–18). But, at the same time, they were not entirely 'absent': in the end, it had to be possible for the devotee to summon the deity successfully in order to obtain a hearing. Divine images were necessary neither for prayers nor for offerings. The lasting proliferation of three-dimensional depictions of the divine in the sanctuaries, however, indicates that the images fostered promising conditions for successful sacrifice and prayer, and were regarded as helpful in creating the necessary divine presence. The term *hedos*, which could equally have the general meaning of 'seat' and indicate a divine image, is instructive in this regard (Scheer 2000: 120; Graf 2001: 229). The literary sources leave enough room at least for concepts of the temporary presence of the gods in or near their images. Visualizations can be understood as an attempt to bridge the gap towards the realm of the divine (Vernant 1991: 153), as 'efficient tools for human communication with the divine sphere' (Pirenne-Delforge 2010: 122). Another theory has assumed that divine images had a specific function as vessels: in the images, divinity is present for human nature in an endurable way (Steiner 2001: 87–9). However, it cannot be ascertained from the sources that this quality can be ascribed only to old *xoana*, in contrast to artistically elaborated statues that were seen as 'dead things formed by human labour' (Steiner 2001: 104): an idea that, once again, makes the Athena Parthenos seem to be of less cultic value than the Polias. It was probably left to the individual worshippers to decide; they could

understand the image of Athena on the Acropolis as a certain kind of epiphany of the divine (Platt 2011: 122) or believe that the goddess actually lived in her images (Steiner 2001: 88). They could take divine images and sanctuaries as potential seats of the divinity (Scheer 2000: 123–5), or assume that depictions of the gods were markings in the space in which, and near which, one could imagine the gods as temporarily present (Gaifman 2012: 34). In general, the depictions in the sanctuaries were seen as an aid by which one hoped to be able to evoke the godlike presence, which was not taken for granted but was necessary to the success of a request. The radiance of the Parthenos and the simple form of the Athena Polias, ennobled by venerable age, worked together towards the Athenians' goal of successfully inviting the invisible goddess Athena to their city's Acropolis. The difficulties of trying to work out a unified conceptualization of the relationship between gods and their images in Greek culture are probably due to more than the patchiness of the sources. Rather, the inconsistencies and flaws in the sources are signs that there was no definite belief that would have been required of viewers and worshippers in all poleis or in every period of Greek history.

For the inhabitants of Athens there was, at no time, a personal obligation to worship images as gods. The ambivalence of the ritual opened a certain freedom of thought—naturally not about the existence of the gods per se, but about the relationship between the gods and the images. Some Athenians may have enjoyed the image of Athena in the Parthenon as an outstanding work of art. Some others probably considered the ancient wooden statue of the Polias important merely as an object affirming Athens' ancient traditions. Yet other citizens may have preferred to address their personal requests, prayers, and libations to the herms before the doors of their houses, and believed that they were then in the presence of the god. All of them were free to do so. If, however, they actively and with evil intent violated the pictorial property of the gods, for example, by removing votive offerings or mutilating the herms, this religious freedom came to an end. Then, at least, it became clear that, for their fellow citizens, these divine images were not just skilfully made aides-memoires or illustrations of mythological tales. No one was required to worship the images, but those who damaged or stole them were punished with death (cf. Ael. *VH* 5.16; Scheer 2000: 152–61).

On the whole, the Athenians of the Classical and of the Hellenistic era believed they were part of a long tradition when they brought the Panathenaic *peplos* to the image of Athena Polias: in the mythical Temple of Troy something similar is said to have happened. That the goddess could still refuse to grant her presence or could nod her refusal was another matter.

Suggested Reading

In recent years, several monographs have been devoted to the relation of gods and images in Greek religion, with varying emphases. Scheer 2000 stresses the function of images as a means of bringing about the temporary presence of the divine, Steiner 2001 sees the images primarily as vessels which both hide and make visible the divine within them, and Platt 2011 makes central the epiphany as an opportunity for visualization. Eich 2011, on the other hand, has stressed the historic function of divine images as a 'storehouse of collective memories'. Gaifman 2012 has treated in detail the role of aniconic cult objects in Greece.

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[*] Translation: Jay Kardan.

CHAPTER 13

DRAMA

CLAUDE CALAME*

INTRODUCTION

THE ideas of action and practice are fundamental in the rich Greek lexicon of ritual. The different ways of performing ritual establish the relationship between gods and mortals. Above all, by means of rhythmic and poetic language presented as a musical offering, mortal men and women invoke the collaboration of gods and heroize figures to mitigate the ephemeral nature and the accidents of their existence. Ritualized invocation assumes different forms of sung poetry: the cultic hymn that calls upon the divine presence in order to propose a *do ut des* contract; the paean addressed generally to Apollo, with its propitiatory or expiatory force; the dithyramb, with its often-narrative character, which makes an offering to the deity out of a heroic tale; the *prosodion* (song of procession) as a processional chant; the Homeric hymn with its narrative aetiology of a god's function and its use as a rhapsodic recitation at a contest inserted into a great cultural celebration; and further, as we shall see, comedy and tragedy inserted into a *mousikos agon*, a musical contest generally dedicated to Dionysos.

It is no accident that this semantic field of ritual is particularly that of tragedy: ritual in tragedy, by means of the dramatization of 'myth', and tragedy as ritual dedicated to the divine. There are no 'myths' in Classical Greece, but a heroic past of the community designated by Herodotos and Thucydides as *palaia* or *archaia* ('things of old'), or even *patroia* (in reference to the deeds of fathers and ancestors). Tragedy derives from the different forms of song that belong to the great indigenous genre of *melos* ('lyric' song), and that present themselves as acts of speech and, consequently, as acts of song and of cult; as such, tragedy is one of the poetic forms without which the narratives about gods and heroes of Greek mythology would not exist. Like other forms of the ritual poetry that is *melos*, Classical Athenian tragedy transforms the narration and dramatization of a 'mythical' heroic action into a ritual performance intended for the divinity. From Homeric poetry to Attic tragedy, *mythos* often means not a 'myth', but a heroic tale presented as a discursive argument. Attic tragedy is significant for Greek polytheistic and civic religion as much in its presentation of the relationships between mortals and gods as by the fact that, as *drama* (e.g. Ar. *Ran*. 920–3), it constitutes a ritual relation with divinity.

TRAGEDY AS *DRAMA* AND AS RITUAL

The *Mousikos Agon* of Tragic Performances

It has been pointed out that tragedy as a musical performance is part of a tetralogy: three tragedies often dramatizing in sequence the same heroic plot, and a satyr play which is sometimes related thematically to the *archaion* (the old and heroic action) dramatized in the tragic sequence. The musical production of the tetralogy is itself in competition with the performance of two other tetralogies in a musical contest, or *mousikos agon*. Generally conceived in choral terms in the Classical era, this dramatized performance of the most striking episodes of the great heroic saga is centred on the Trojan War (of which Achilles, Agamemnon, and

Helen are the principal protagonists, along with the gods) and the Theban saga (Oedipus and his descendants along with the Seven against Thebes).

From the standpoint of its temporality, the contest among the three tragic tetralogies took place at Athens during the Great Dionysia. Opened by a prelude in which poets and actors were presented to the public and the programme of musical contests was announced, the *mousikoi agones* began with the contest of dithyrambs: ten choral groups of fifty adult singers, choristers representing each of the ten tribes of democratic Athens, then ten choirs of fifty young men, each choir—like the adult choirs—financed by a single *choregos*. Next came the competition of the five comedies, each undertaken by a choral group of twenty-four singers, followed by the three days devoted to the three tragic tetralogies, each performed by a chorus of twelve, and later of fifteen, *choreutai* (see especially Demosthenes *Meid*. 10, citing the law of Euagoras that may have dated to the fifth century BCE). Nearly one-fifth of the citizenry of Athens took an active musical part in the celebration of the Great Dionysia —a choral and musical celebration that was ritualized by wearing masks and costumes, and by diction divided between iambic trimeters and sung and danced lyrics that were derived from the great tradition of melic poetry. The 'City Dionysia' represented the most important cultural celebration (along with the civic and religious festival of the Panathenaia in midsummer) for the politico-religious inauguration of the new year in Athens. (For documents on all ritual aspects of Attic theatre, see Pickard-Cambridge 1968; and for descriptions of fourth-century BCE Classical theatre, see Hurwit 1999: 47–58; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 160–1.)

At the turn of the century, with the reforms of Kleisthenes, the musical performance of dithyrambs and tragedies was moved from the choral area at the north-east of the *agora* to the south of the Acropolis, in order to be better integrated into the sanctuary of Dionysos at the foot of the hill dominated by Athena and Poseidon, the city's tutelary deities. The insertion of tragic choruses into a sanctuary of Dionysos may then have followed.

A Cult and Ritual Practices for Dionysos?

The *mousikos agon* of dithyrambs, tragedies, and comedies was introduced by a grand procession, corresponding to the cultic procession (*pompe*). The day before the first musical contest, the statue of the god was taken from the sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereos at the foot of the Acropolis. The sanctuary included a temple dating from the end of Archaic period, with the *xoanon* (the old wooden statue) of the god, and a temple of the Classical period, decorated with paintings depicting various episodes in the divine biography of Dionysos. This collection of narratives illustrates certain foundation myths of the cult of Dionysos, as well as the god's connection to Athens by means of the founding hero of the democratic city; this iconographical narration thus contributes to the introduction of the god Dionysos from the exterior to the centre of the city. His divine biography lives, henceforth, next to the Acropolis, in the neighbourhood of the sanctuaries consecrated to the city's two tutelary deities.

The old statue of the god was then moved to his small temple next to the Academy, near the deme of Kolonos. Pausanias (1.19.3) mentions this sanctuary, stating that the statue of Dionysos Eleuthereos was brought there each year at a fixed date, probably on the evening of 8 or 9 Elaphebolion (end of March). Late inscriptions from the second century BCE tell us that, after this first transfer and a sacrifice, Dionysos was brought back 'from a low altar' to the theatre by torchlight and was honoured by the sacrifice of a bull. Without doubt, this altar must be identified with the one found at the north-west of the *agora*, next to the Altar of the Twelve Gods. It is there that not only the sacrifice of a he-goat but especially the *xenismos*—the ritual welcome of Dionysos in the form of a *theoxenia*, a ritual reception of a god—would have taken place (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 91–8). Then the *pompe* described in the law of Euagoras and many epigraphical documents would have brought the statue of Dionysos back to his sanctuary in the theatre, so that the god might be present at the musical performances offered to him. Participants in the procession included metics carrying vessels for the wine and citizens in charge of goatskins, while the wives of the metics carried *hydriai*, water jugs, as instruments for the proper mixing of the wine. Behind them always came the *choregoi* (as mentioned) and *kanephoroi* (basket bearers). Second in importance after the Panathenaia, the great procession culminated in the sanctuary of Dionysos with a sacrifice that, at one time, must have been conducted by the *epheboi*. The sacrifice took place in the

sanctuary, as stated by an inscription (*IG* II^2 1006.12), which adds that the victim was a bull 'worthy of the god', an expression evoking the anonymous little cultic poem that invokes Dionysos as an *axie taure*, 'worthy bull', in inviting him to appear in his temple (*Carm. pop*. fr. 871 Page; on sacrifice, see, in this volume, Naiden, Chapter 31).

Thus, Attic tragedy partakes of the ritual scenario of every cultic celebration in the Greek cities generally: a procession punctuated by songs, involving the participation, with ritual apparatus, of several subgroups of the community; an elaborate sacrifice followed by a ritual meal for male and female representatives of these groups; poetic confrontations, with sung and danced demonstrations addressed as musical offerings to the divinity being celebrated; and athletic contests demonstrating the physical and moral qualities of the aristocratic citizen (see Calame 1992, with bibliography). In the Great Dionysia, this last function seems to have been taken over by a disproportionate development of the dithyramb competition on the one hand, and by the comic competition on the other. The dithyramb contest, with its organization according to the ten Kleisthenic tribes, must surely be related to the development of democratic structures and the corresponding growth of corps of citizens and their sons. The contest of comedies is certainly connected with the cult of Dionysos and the critical debate brought on by the contested sharing of political power. The ironic derision of Dionysos himself in a comedy such as the *Frogs* of Aristophanes would surely have been impossible except as ritualized and expressed in the forms of poetry of reproach and blame (in contrast to tragedy, which aligns with the heroic poetry of praise). In tragedy as much as in comedy, ritual and individual relations with the gods are brought into question.

In regard to tragic performance as 'drama', let us remember that Aristotle himself compares not only Sophokles but also Aristophanes to Homer (Ar. *Poet*. 1148a 24–9; cf. also 1448b 32–8 and 1459a 18). In his view, the three poets were all *mimetai*, authors of representations in that they represented characters who 'acted and did' (*prattontes kai drontes*): hence the characterization of tragedy and comedy as *dramata*, and the need for tragic plots (*muthoi*) to have a 'dramatic' form. In the *Republic* (392c), in regard to this topic of poetry and *mimesis*, Plato defines two modes of narrative, one in which the narration is undertaken by the poet (the 'diegetic' mode), the other in which it is left to the actions of the

protagonists (the ‘dramatic’ mode). Thus Homeric poetry, with its narrative punctuated by dialogue, is classified as a ‘mixed’ mode, while tragedy is entirely ‘dramatic’.

Choral poetry is associated with tragedy as a ritual practice and musical offering dedicated to the god. Xenophon (*Hipp*. 3.2) makes this clear when he writes of processions that must please both the gods and the spectators: ‘It is the same at the Dionysia, where the choruses seek to please the gods, especially the twelve gods.’ From this, we must conclude that the tragic spectacle is to be considered as a cultic act, or at least as a strongly ritualized religious practice. While being specially developed and having contributed to the creation of specific poetic genres, the *mousikoi agones* that made up the ritual celebration of the Great Dionysia in fifth-century BCE Athens were nothing more than the counterpart of the musical and/or athletic contests that mark a large number of the great Athenian cultic celebrations. Other examples include the above-mentioned Great Panathenaia in honour of Athena Polias (a contest of Homeric rhapsodies), the Thargelia (a contest of dithyrambs) for Apollo, the Anthesteria for the Dionysos of wine, the Eleusinia for Demeter, the Theseia for the founding hero of the city, and so on—all festivals that strike us as eminently religious (Osborne 2003 lists the relevant festivals).

There is no point in trying to establish a relation between the form or content of each tragedy and the functions and field of activity of Dionysos. The ritual of comedy and of satyr drama, introduced later, is meant to evoke explicitly the cult of Dionysos. Tragedy represents probably a poetic development derived from the narrative and sung form of the rhapsodic *nomos*: a kind of choral poem practised especially by the poet Stesichoros, presenting the most dramatic episodes of the heroic saga transmitted by epic poetry. As poetic and musical ritualized performance, Attic tragedy is thus consecrated to the god residing in the frontier outpost that was the community of Eleutherai. Attic tragedy and comedy allowed the dramatization of a poetical and critical reflection on the community’s past, on political and religious life, and on the human condition, in interaction with the gods.

VERBAL RITES IN TRAGEDY: HYMNIC FORMS

Having considered tragedy as ritual devoted to the deity, we turn now to rite and to relations with the gods in tragedy.

It is only recently that the vain poetico-philosophical quest for the essence of 'the tragic' has been abandoned. It was understood as being rooted in the action of the 'tragic hero', often without consideration of great heroines such as Hekabe, Antigone, or Helen, and without considering the ritual dramatization of that 'tragic' action. Moreover, the lack of a definition for a working concept of ritual has allowed a certain vagueness to surround a controversial question. Thus, under the heading 'ritual in tragedy' it was possible to cite at random the solemn imprecation of Oedipus against the unknown murderer of Laius in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophokles; the evocation of the procession and sacrifices of the Great Panathenaia at the end of the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus; the appeal to the 'epiphany' of Darius or the funeral lament that ends the *Persians*; as well as Creusa's taking refuge at the altar of Apollo in the *Ion* of Euripides (see Easterling 1988; Wiles 2000: 38–45). This is a heterogeneous list of ritual acts, individual and collective, verbal and non-verbal, enacted onstage or merely reported, with or without relevance to the gods. The forms of ritual discourse and the sequences of ritual acts performed on the stage are numerous, and the effects of staged ritual performances on the dramatic action represented in the theatre are also diverse.

I would like now to propose two examples of staged ritual practices that, in hymnic form, introduce authority in communication with the gods and invite the divine to intervene in the action.

The Pragmatics of a Dramatized Choral Hymn

In regard to the hymnic forms inserted into the dramatic action, Euripides' tragedy *Ion* is particularly significant. Let us remember that Ion is the future founding and eponymous hero of Ionia; in the play, he is in the

cultic service of his father Apollo; Creusa, his mother, is a daughter of Erechtheus (one of the first legendary kings of Athens) and the wife of the Achaean Xouthos. The noble Xouthos indicates that he is crossing the threshold of the sanctuary at Delphi by asserting his wish to consult the oracle of the god about his wife's sterility. The choral ode provoked by his intervention (417–24, then 452–71 for the beginning of the stasimon) assumes the form of a cultic hymn, with the expected tripartite structure. With the self-referential and performative (in the linguistic sense of the concept, as speech act) form of the supplication (*se hiketeuo*), the chorus indicates the type of act of utterance with which it invokes Athena: the initial hymnic form of *invocatio* (invocation) Then, in a very brief *epica laus* (epic praise) of a narrative sort, which recalls the central part of the shortest *Homeric Hymns*, the chorus gives the genealogy of the goddess, who was born from the head of Zeus. Finally, Athena Nike is invited to visit Delphi in order to ally herself with Artemis, the daughter of Leto.

In regard to the practical relations between mortals and gods, the appeal for the intervention of the goddess is most interesting. It brings together the spatio-temporal framework of the dramatized heroic action with the *here and now* of the tragic performance. The chorus of heroic times invites both Athena and Artemis to intervene in the dramatic action. Meanwhile, watching the drama, in the cultic service of Dionysos Eleuthereos, the spectators are seated on a hillside, on one side of which stands the temple consecrated to Athena Polias (venerated every year in the Panathenaia), and on the other, in the form of a vast portico, rises the now-vanished sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia.

In the final portion of this choral prayer to the deity, the traditional form of the cultic and 'cletic' hymn is modified (on prayer see also, in this volume, Versnel, Chapter 30). After the appeal for the presence of the deity, the young chorus members delegate their supplication to the two maiden goddesses (*parthenoi*), both of them sisters of Apollo by their common father, Zeus:

> O maidens (*korai*), make supplication
> That Erechtheus' ancient
> Race may at long last,
> By pure prophecies,
> Obtain a good posterity. (467–71)

As Athenian servants of Creusa, the young women of the chorus seem not only to resemble the two maiden goddesses in performing the ritual of supplication, but also to adopt the point of view of the Athenian spectators in characterizing the family of the founding king Erechtheus as *palaion*: this *genos* belongs to the heroic past of Athens.

Unlike the monody sung by Ion at the beginning of the tragedy, the hymnic supplication delegated to the two maiden goddesses will have the full cultic effect wished for by Xouthos. At the end of the drama it is Pallas Athena, the eponymous Athena of Athens, who intervenes as *dea ex machina* to resolve the plot; in such a way we attend another coincidence of the time and space of the heroic action with the time and place of the dramatic representation (1553–605). Not only will Ion rule over Attica before colonizing the Cyclades and Ionia (a prefiguration of the contemporary Athenian 'empire'), Creusa and Xouthos will have two sons, the future eponymous heroes of the Dorians and of the Achaeans. (For the aetiological significance of this founding conclusion, see Calame 2007: 279–82; consult also Zeitlin 1996: 285–338.)

Despite the fact that the pragmatic logic is realized at the end of the tragedy, the choral ode begun as a hymn continues (472–509). The following epode consists of an address to the cave of Pan on the flank of the Athenian Acropolis: a pretext for mentioning not only the place where the newborn son of Apollo was exposed, but also the dances of the daughters of Kekrops, to whom Athena entrusted the education of the young Erichthonios. By means of the 'choral projection' common in the odes of Attic tragedy, the young women of the chorus project their actual song and dance into the 'mythical' dance of the Kekropidai; they again bring about a coincidence in spatiality and temporality between the dramatic action in which they are involved and their own ritual and choral action, *hic et nunc*.

In some sense, the three semantic constituents of any melic poem are found in this female choral ode: the first-person ritual reference to the circumstances of the song, the gnomic commentary that evokes the present situation, and, finally, the reference to the heroic past—to the plot and the paradigmatic protagonists of a 'myth' in relation to the pragmatics of the action sung in the present. While fulfilling its practical function and effect on the unfolding of the dramatic action, the initial cultic hymn to Athena and Artemis is contained in this elegant melic and choral poem, with a

ritual efficacy that also includes the spectators in their individual relations with the tutelary goddess of the city, *here and now*.

Prayer and Hymnic Practice

The oracular response at the centre of the tragedy devoted to the young Ion proves wholly unfavourable to Creusa. Not only is she denied any descendants, but Ion, who will be revealed as her son, is attributed to Xouthos. Creusa's long emotional lament leads first into an address to Apollo himself (a hymnic song critical of the god) and then into a new exchange between the heroine and the old pedagogue who served Erechtheus. This stichomythia elaborates the plan to expunge the affront of Apollo's unjust oracular decision denying a son to Creusa: Ion will be killed, not by the sword, but by the venom of the Gorgon's serpents. The chorus addresses its ode to the goddess Einodia, who is often identified with Hekate, and is the mistress of potions and of magic formulae (for the identification of Hekate Phosphoros with Einodia, see e.g. *Hel*. 569–70; other references in Zeitlin 1996: 310–11). She is not the city divinity dominating political and economic activity, but a divine power attached to the routines of everyday life. This third 'stasimon' begins with a prayer (1048–60). Sung chorally, the prayer must take the tripartite form of the hymn. Thus, it opens as usual with a brief, direct invocation to Einodia, presented as the daughter of Demeter. By means of a so-called 'hymnic relative', the descriptive part (*epica laus*) then depicts the goddess in one of her domains of competence: nocturnal assaults:

> Einodia, daughter of Demeter, you
> Who rule over nocturnal attacks,
> Escort in daylight the contents
> Of the deadly vessel
> Against those to whom
> My mistress sends it
> From the drippings of the
> Chthonic Gorgon's cut throat. (1048–55)

Thus, we move quickly to the prayer that enjoins Einodia to escort the cup of wine poisoned with drops of the Gorgon's blood to the palace of Erechtheus' children (in a new journey from Delphi to Athens). The metaphor leads into an imprecation: 'May a foreigner from a foreign house never reign over the city if he is not a noble descendant of the Erechtheids' (1058–60) (see Calame 2005: 19–22 with n. 8; Furley and Bremer 2000: I, 329 have seen that the imprecation is comparable to a verbal gesture of *defixio*, in Greek *katadesmos*).

In this way, the brief hymnic prayer ends in the formula of a spell moving from the request to the divinity for direct intervention, to this other form of request for divine power, the ritual word that binds: oath, malediction, 'magical' formula, or simple imprecation. The utterance of ritual efficacy may take an individual or collective form, rendering vain the recent debate between the upholders of the 'polis-religion' and those who see individual practices in the ritual of a polytheistic system. In this particular case, we witness a new appropriation of the form of the cultic hymn to the deity: used to insert prayer into the dramatic action, in order to direct the action through the appearance of a superhuman power. We can imagine the same dynamics in the current cultic and ritual practices of the average Athenian; taking part in the different rituals of the Great Dionysia or the Panathenaia, he or she will shape his or her own cultic practice according to these ritual forms, privately or at the numerous other public occasions offered by a rich polytheistic (gods and heroes) calendar. Once again the initial hymnic form, with its religious pragmatics, is put at the service of choral song, to comment upon and enrich the dramatic action, while, at the same time, seeking, through the formulae of ritual speech, to influence its course. We recognize here the interlacing of the three voices that animate the polyphony of the tragic chorus: performative, hermeneutic, and affective.

Whether they are monodic or choral, the melic songs of Euripidean tragedy take up traditional cultic and poetic forms in order to redirect them, both formally and pragmatically, towards the heroic action represented in the theatre, and to arouse there the intervention of gods and divine powers. But occasionally these ritual practices are related, if not to the cultic act that constitutes the tragic performance itself, at least to the religious practices of the public participating in the musical contest dedicated to Dionysos, in a face-to-face critique that is mediated by the

wearing of masks. Thus, we find ourselves brought back from the ritual in tragedy to tragedy as ritual—we examine this next.

FROM 'MYTH' TO 'RITUAL': TRAGIC AETIOLOGIES

It often happens in drama that the deity directly intervenes in the tragic action. Whatever the scenic form of his epiphany, this usually occurs at the end of the tragedy, in order to resolve the plot. This is especially the case in the concluding scenario of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, which will be examined briefly before returning to two further examples from the tragedies of Euripides.

A Religious and Civic Conclusion

In the *Eumenides*, Athena intervenes at first as the principal protagonist of the action, responding to the indirect appeal of the Erinyes in the famous 'binding hymn' (306) sung by the goddesses of vengeance at the beginning of the tragedy. In the course of the action, the tutelary goddess Athena establishes the tribunal of the Areopagos, and installs the Eumenides on the Acropolis, in the sanctuary that will become the Erechtheion. The tragedy concludes ritually, with the procession that will take the Eumenides to their new home; the goddess invites the Athenian 'sons of Kranaos' to take their place in the ritual cortege. Thus, the final song of the *exodos* is a choral invitation to the goddesses, henceforth propitious and venerable, to come 'here' (*deuro*, 1041) and to accompany the final procession 'now' (*nun*, 1043, 1047). The ritual cry punctuating the song seals the pact between Zeus and Fate to the advantage of the inhabitants of Athens:

> Peace for all time between the immigrants
> And Pallas' citizens. Thus all-seeing Zeus

> And Fate go together.
> Cry out now in response to our song.
> (1044–7)

By these declarative and semantic means, the time and place of the end of the dramatic action are made to coincide with the *hic et nunc* of the musical performance witnessed by the Athenian spectators. With a reiterated, inclusive second-person plural, they too are called to respect the justice administered by the Areopagos under the aegis of Zeus, and to worship the Eumenides in their new sanctuary. Athena's intervention in her scenic epiphany leads the plot to the institution of a tribunal and of a cult. Thus, in an aetiological game common in Classical Greece, 'myth' leads to 'ritual': the past and tragic time of heroes guilty of hubris brings about a present of cultic veneration of the gods and heroes of the city's pantheon, aimed at maintaining civic order.

The Tragic Establishment of Rituals: The Blood of Men, the Blood of Women

The conclusion of the *Iphigenia in Tauris* is yet more illustrative in this respect than the *Eumenides*. In order to escape the Erinyes, Orestes follows Apollo's order to go to the northern country of the Tauri to bring back to Athens the statue of Artemis venerated in a sanctuary in that barbarian realm. According to the version in the *Cypria*, the goddess had installed Iphigenia as her priestess there. Doomed to be offered as a sacrifice to the barbarian goddess, Orestes finally makes himself known to Iphigenia, and the two young Greeks flee to Athens with the statue of the bloodthirsty deity. It is then the function of Pallas Athena to resolve the conflict between brother and sister and between the king of Tauris and Artemis, the despoiled goddess.

Intervening as *dea ex machina*, Athena begins by revealing to the king of Tauris that Orestes has done no more than follow the oracular command of Apollo. Then she orders Orestes himself to construct a temple intended to welcome to Attica the divine image brought from far-off Tauris in Scythia. In this sanctuary (also situated in a border region) the indigenous statue will receive the honours due to an Artemis called Tauropolos: this

epiclesis must hold in the etymological and aetiological memory the sufferings endured by the young hero pursued by the Erinyes during his wanderings (*peripolon*, 1455). To the space consecrated to the Artemis of the wanderings in Tauris and to the hymns that will honour her, the tutelary goddess of Athens adds a bloodthirsty ritual gesture, a gesture of piety (*hosias hekati*, 1461). She invites the young man himself to initiate the ritual of the drops of fresh blood, made to spout from a man's throat as a commemorative gesture. The rite is doubtless intended to recall both Orestes' murder of his mother and the risk he has run of a ritual immolation at the hands of his own sister, now the priestess of the Greco-Scythian goddess.

Finally, Athena tells Iphigenia that she will be attached to the cult of this same goddess of savage countries in Brauron, another sanctuary on the borders of Attica. After her death, the memory of the heroine will be celebrated by offerings of rags left on behalf of women who have died in childbirth (1462–7). By the mediation of the sacrificed young girl and by death in childbirth, we have the celebration of the protection given by Artemis to pregnant women and to young child-bearers at another, especially delicate, moment of passage—from the male blood of murder to the female blood of childbirth. Finally, by a route that leads us from the periphery of Attica to the civic and judicial centre of Athens itself, Athena concludes her aetiological intervention by mentioning the institution of the democratic vote in the Areopagos on the occasion of Orestes' sentencing.

Although the honours given to Iphigenia as a heroic attendant of Artemis in her famous cult of Brauron seem to have only late attestation, the deme of Halai Araphenides, also on the northern borders of Attica, was known since the fourth century BCE for its cult of Artemis Tauropolos (attested by Strabo 9.1.22; cf. also *SEG* 34.103, 15). The Areopagos would clearly be present in the minds of all the spectators of a tragedy produced at the end of the fifth century BCE, just as it was for the spectators of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. (For the complex question of Iphigenia's association with Artemis in the cult of Brauron, see Giuman 1999, 84–8 and 162–79; see also Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 418–22, despite Dunn 1996, 45–63.) Furthermore, in retracing his tragic biography for his recognized sister, Orestes himself does not fail to mention the absolution received with

Athena's support on the hill of Ares, as well as the sanctuary (*hierón*, 969) where the Erinyes agreed to be honoured, not far from the Areopagos.

Once again, by the dramatized intervention of a deity, tragedy in performance establishes a complex aetiological relation between the dramatized heroic narrative and the ritual acts that mark the heroization of its principal protagonists. Thanks to the divine manifestation and the word of authority from Athena, the outcome of *Iphigenia in Tauris* returns us, after all, to the cultic reality and the religious practices known to the spectators venerating Dionysos Eleuthereos in his sanctuary-theatre. In her final intervention, the tutelary goddess establishes both the rule (*nomos*, 1458) of human blood spouting in the sanctuary of Halai and the democratic rule (*nomisma*, 1471) on the Areopagos, as well as the sanctuary of the goddess whose attendant Iphigenia becomes at Brauron (1463). The use by Athena of the forms of the close demonstrative *hode* situates these institutional words between *Deixis am Phantasma* (appeal to the spectator's imagination) and *demonstratio ad oculos* (demonstrative reference to the 'here and now'). So the fictional relation that the dramatic narrative has constructed between the heroic and tragic action on the one hand, and the rite founded and legitimized by the deity on the other, makes reference to real and actual religious and cultic practices in the *here and now* of the tragic performance (see Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 31–40 and 301–8).

Made up of young Greek servants, the chorus can now conclude the tragedy with these words, sung between a 'you' (plural) that includes the protagonists of the dramatic action, and a 'we' that includes the Athenian spectators:

> Go, fortunate in the lucky
> Rescue of your fate.
> But o Pallas Athena,
> Revered of immortals and mortals,
> We shall do (*drasomen*) as you order.
> (1490–4)

The Dramatic and Ritual Establishment of Founding Myths

Among the extant tragedies of Euripides, the ritual conclusion that Athena gives to the *Erechtheus* is undoubtedly still more demonstrative for the establishment of cultic practices that acquire a narrative foundational base in the heroic action enacted onstage while referring to the spectators' religious knowledge and ritual praxis. In this political drama, drawn from the founding history of Athens, the game of tragic aetiology is again left to Athena intervening as *dea ex machina*. Eumolpos, son of Poseidon and king of Thrace, tries to take Attica from its ruler Erechtheus, who succeeds in defeating the enemy army. Poseidon avenges the death of his royal son Eumolpos by making Erechtheus vanish.

With the intention of pronouncing (*semano*) in the manner of the Delphic oracle and in performative mode, Athena again manifests her divinity and orders the cultic future fated for all the protagonists who have died in the unfolding of the tragic plot (fr. 370.64–100 Kannicht). Transformed into a constellation under the probable name of the Hyades, the daughters of Erechtheus—as Hyakinthides—will enjoy honours both heroic and divine, which the inhabitants of the city will pay them every year in the form of sacrifices of cattle and girls' choral dances. Moreover, Erechtheus' daughters will have the first fruits of the sacrifices made before every battle, with a libation of honey and water. Erechtheus himself will henceforth have a sanctuary at the centre of the city, bounded by an enclosure of stone; his memory will be honoured by the sacrifices of citizens under the name of Poseidon himself, whose heroic attendant he thus becomes. As for his wife Praxithea, who was able to repair the very foundations of the city, Athena makes her into her priestess: she will be charged with sacrificing the first offerings on the altars of the goddess.

To be sure, only three meagre indications allow us to locate the 'inaccessible precinct' that Athena reserves for the Hyakinthides in the place called Sphendonai, to the west of the city of Athens (Phot. *Lexicon*, 397, 7, Porson, in a gloss that refers to the *Atthis* of the historian Phanodemos, *FGrH* 325 F 4). But the spectators of the fifth century BCE, like modern readers, had no difficulty in identifying the sanctuary promised by Athena to the king of Athens with the Erechtheion.

Historically, the first production of the *Erechtheus* by Euripides, shortly before the Peace of Nikias, coincides with the end of the first phase of the Peloponnesian War: it coincides also with the period of renewed construction of that high birthplace of Athenian autochthony that is the temple with the Caryatid portico (on the Erechtheion and its date, see Hurwit: 1999: 200–9). Praxithea takes up the ideology of autochthony in order to proclaim its political dimension onstage. Putting herself in the place of King Erechtheus, as it were, the queen declares and affirms: 'A better city than this could not be found: its populace has not immigrated here from elsewhere, but we were born of its soil' (fr. 360.6–8 Kannicht). Praxithea represents both the female and the male citizens of Athens in a collective 'we', even before affirming the maternal role proper to her sex, that is, to give birth to children in order to defend the gods' altars and the country. Without a son, and therefore without a soldier to offer up to the glory of death in combat, Praxithea will consent to the political sacrifice of one of her daughters, for the triumph of Athena over Poseidon. She will offer the fruit of her womb to the earth from which the Athenians were born, for the welfare of the city, to save 'this city' (*tende polin*, 42 and 52), to save the citizens whom, concluding her speech, she addresses directly: *o politai* (50).

Spatially and temporally, the heroic action onstage thus comes to coincide with the *here and now* of the production witnessed by the spectators assembled in the theatre at the height of the Peloponnesian War. This coincidence is furthered by the declarative movement of Praxithea's speech: in her final appeal to the citizens, then to the nation, the queen addresses herself equally to the members of the chorus and to the spectators watching the production in the heart of the sanctuary consecrated to Dionysos Eleuthereos. Like Athena's intervention in her final epiphany, the deictic gestures by which the wife of Erechtheus punctuates her discourse to make the polis 'this city' again combine *Deixis am Phantasma* and *demonstratio ad oculos* with a double reference: it refers as much to the legendary city threatened by Eumolpos of Thrace in the time of Erechtheus as to the present city weakened by the incursions of the Spartan army and awaiting with equal fervour the intervention of its tutelary deities to save it.

In temporal terms, the aetiological and ritual ending that Athena gives to the tragic action, with the installation of Praxithea as her chief priestess,

leads the spectators from the past foundation of the city to the present and the cult by which they annually worship the tutelary goddess. Spatially, the establishment of the cult of Erechtheus invites them to the Acropolis, 'to the centre of the city', among the gods and heroes who have created Athens and continue to protect her.

CONCLUSION

If it is true that the rituals represented between stage and orchestra actualize the religious relations of the Athenians with their various deities, while bringing them into question; if it true that the aetiological endings of many tragedies allow for the deity's epiphany and relate the heroic action to the ritual performance *here and now*, then Attic tragedy is itself a musical offering to the god of theatre and, indirectly, to the gods that it puts onstage. Tragedy, like comedy, is, par excellence, the religious act of incipient democracy; it represents, under a poetic and musical form, a human and heroic action displayed in its complex relations with the gods and continually brought under discussion by its various protagonists, especially the chorus.

SUGGESTED READING

For the *realia* and commentary on the documents concerning the ritual organization of the tragic and comic contests at Athens, Pickard-Cambridge 1968 remains the basic manual, not superseded by Csapo and Slater 1994. On the connections between tragic performance and the religious and political reality of the Athenian public, see especially Goldhill 1990, 1997, and Osborne 1993—keeping in mind the warning of Vidal-Naquet 2001. The contributions of Parker 1997 and Sourvinou-Inwood 1997 clarify the relations of tragedy with religion, as well as the complexity of the relations of the protagonists of the dramatic action with the gods. Seaford 1994: 235–80, 368–405 points out the cultic relations of Athens with Dionysos and the ambiguities of the rituals represented on the

tragic stage. See also Parker 2005: 136–52 on ‘religion in the theatre’. For the morphology of Greek cultic celebration, I refer the reader to Calame 1992. The ritualist theories of tragedy developed notably by Gilbert Murray (*ap*. Jane E. Harrison), René Girard, and Walter Burkert are examined in Graf 2007. For the poetic, musical, and ritualized forms taken up by tragedy, see the classic work of Herrington 1985. But it is, above all, the work of Sourvinou-Inwood 2003 that addresses most directly, and in detail, the question of tragedy as ritual and of ritual in tragedy. For the problems posed by Attic tragedy in general, the best introduction is Di Benedetto and Medda 2002 [1977]. Also useful are the two *Companions* of Easterling 1997 and Gregory 2005. On the *Ion* of Euripides and its aetiological conclusion, consult Calame 2007: 259–85; see also Zeitlin 1996: 285–338. On hymnic forms, see Furley and Bremmer 2001, especially vol. 1. For the ritual relations established with the gods in these forms, see Calame 2005: 19–35. For the role of the chorus, see the numerous references in Calame 2013 and 1994/1995 on the three choral voices (affective, performative, and hermeneutic); see also the contributions of Gould 1996, Goldhill 1996, and Dupont, 2007. The question of the pragmatics of the *humnos desmios* in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus is well treated in Henrichs 1994/1995, which also discusses the ‘performative’ role of the songs of the tragic chorus. The problem of the cultic reality of the aetiological conclusions of Attic tragedies is naturally treated by Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, *passim*, in contrast with the study of Dunn 1996, which considers the aetiologies concluding the tragedies of Euripides as fictions. On this question, see also Kowalzig 2006. For the aetiological conclusion of the *Iphigenia* in particular see Wolff 1992, with a supplemental treatment of the cults in Giuman 1999. For the *Erechtheus*, see Calame 2011. For the different cases of the figure of intra- and extra-discursive deixis in Greek poetry, see the various contributions published in *Arethusa* 37, 2004, devoted to *The Poetics of Deixis*.

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CHAPTER 14

HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION: MYTH VS. HISTORY

MYTH and history both consist in stories about the past, but their claims to truth have been in dispute ever since the two were first distinguished in the discourse of the fifth century BCE. Myth, with its undoubted element of imagination and frequent concern with the supernatural, is initially on the defensive in this argument. Its relationship with truth, however understood, is not straightforward; the truth of myth lies below or beyond the narrative, something that is encoded or symbolized. History, by contrast, defined its business already on the first page of Herodotos as getting the record straight—the record that is 'out there' in the sources, waiting to be discovered and assessed. Within a generation, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* gives such a powerful impression of factual accuracy and impartial judgement that it was long the gold standard for historians. Once history had seized the high ground of truth, defenders of myth required new tactics to reclaim it. Rationalization and allegorization were popular choices in antiquity; in both cases, something

has to be done *to* myth to make it speak truth. The argument is conceded before it is begun.

Indeed, well before Herodotos, in the Ionic enlightenment of the sixth century BCE, radical thinkers had begun to challenge the authority of poets, and question the myths that were their stock in trade (see, in this volume, Benitez and Tarrant, Chapter 15). *Mythos*, originally a solemn word denoting authoritative, performative pronouncement, slowly acquired its meaning of an imaginative, even fictive, tale, with reference especially to the stories we now call the Greek myths. This development—the 'invention of mythology'—had been completed by Plato's day (Fowler 2011). The distinction between fabulous myth, peddled by poets, and truthful history was commonplace throughout the rest of antiquity.

Another Enlightenment, that of the eighteenth century, took matters considerably further. There was a sense of a decisive break with the past, and a belief in the possibility of human perfection in a brave new world, effected by the power of pure reason. A naive point of view, as the endless carnage of modern war must make one think, yet it was precisely the naiveté of ancient myth that attracted the derision of writers like Vico, Fontenelle, and Heyne (Most 1999: 37–40). The notion was born here that there had once been a mythical age of humanity, characterized by superstition, ignorance, and fear. Myth, in this scheme, was a childish misapprehension of reality.

Positivism, denying validity to metaphysics and seeking to derive natural laws objectively from observable facts, was a powerful offshoot of the Enlightenment. The founder was Auguste Comte, but to some extent he was articulating ideas generally in the atmosphere (Gane 2006; Iggers 2011). To be sure, no great nineteenth-century historian, whether Niebuhr, Macaulay, Grote, Mommsen, or Wilamowitz, was under any illusion that a personal point of view was inevitable in the writing of history. Even the prophet of historical positivism himself, Leopold von Ranke, was aware that his anti-Hegelianism was a kind of philosophy (Krieger 1977). Nevertheless, these historians would have argued that their judgements were, within the limits of human imperfection, objectively true, being derived from the data. To assemble the data was, therefore, the first duty of the historian, and, throughout the century, legions of historians in the new universities toiled like the Nibelungen, collecting and editing manuscripts, inscriptions, documents, and artefacts.

The industry of these scholars, their countless factual discoveries, and their advances in method place us all in their debt. The philosophical underpinnings of positivist historiography were, however, exposed to lethal criticism in the twentieth century by anti-Enlightenment and postmodern thinkers such as Walter Benjamin (1973: 245–55; Pensky 2004; de Wilde 2009) and Hayden White (1973, 1978, 1987). History cannot be written without imposing some kind of order on the original chaos. The patterns that give meaning are inevitably ideological, because the generation and apprehension of meaning are social processes. Definitions of ideology are notoriously slippery, but they all refer to a collection of beliefs and values which are socially rooted and shared, make sense of the world, and govern behaviour (Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009). If we place, alongside this, the definition of myth most commonly cited by classicists, that of Walter Burkert—'a traditional tale with secondary, partial reference to something of collective importance' (Burkert 1979: 23)—we see that there is a substantial overlap. The content of any ideology is difficult to express, and impossible to justify, without a story (usually teleological). Ideology and myth both work by their hold on the *imaginaire* of the subscribing collective (Csapo 2005: 276–315; Barthes 2012 [1957]).

Just as myth addresses large questions about human life and the world we live in, so does history; and both draw on similar emotional, cognitive, and narrative resources for their effects. A large body of work in the late twentieth century, building on the seminal but controversial writings of White, has explored the narrative tropes deployed by historians to represent and make sense of the past (Lorenz 2011). White famously said that history is not so much found as invented (Hayden 1978: 82), a claim that infuriated professional historians, and proved to casual observers the fundamental immorality of postmodernism. Whether White's anti-realism and relativism are as thoroughgoing as his critics say they are may be questioned, but the furious reaction certainly revealed deep anxiety about the historical enterprise.

That history is *only* story does not seem to do justice to its nature. At a basic level there are constraints in the record the historian cannot ignore (Williams 2002: 241–50). Yet it must be granted that narrative and history interact at very basic levels (Ricoeur 1984–1988); and all narrative contains fictive elements. Every historian must fill in the gaps in the

evidence by surmise and conjecture. These manoeuvres are often well hidden, but they are always there, because there are always gaps. After centuries of methodological refinement, historians, in this respect, work exactly like Herodotos. The latter's gaps are bigger and more obvious (to us, at any rate), and he must work harder to fill them in. Modern historians may have more facts to work with, and, depending on the questions they put to them, may succeed in concealing the gaps better. But it is hard to see a difference in the procedure.

In fundamental ways, then, the twentieth century challenged the distinction between myth and history. One need not support a totally deconstructive view of this problem to recognize the difficulty it poses for those who would interpret the intellectual landscape of fifth- and fourth-century BCE Greece, when the distinctions between myth and history (and, more generally, between myth and *logos*, the faculty of reason) were still inchoate. To disentangle them, in post-Enlightenment terms, entails a risk of serious misreading, which has led some scholars to deny the legitimacy of applying the word 'myth' at all to ancient Greece, as being an alien category (Calame 2003, 2008). This may go too far, since the change in discourse seems clear in the ancient record, and this discourse was inherited directly by early modern Europe. The danger of reading the story teleologically is easily avoided, and the aberrations of the Enlightenment reading easily identified. It also needs to be remembered that this is a European tale; to what extent the conceptual framework finds significant analogies in other traditions raises a host of new questions, all but intractable.

Nevertheless, there is no use pretending that the matter can be definitively settled, even in a restricted European context. Since myth and history were separated, the two have existed in symbiosis, and can only be understood in mutual relation. The oscillation between them may be so rapid as to be a blur, and there will be cases where one cannot be sure what one is dealing with. This is particularly true for one's own myths; they always seem like history. The difficult case in the ancient context is heroic legend. No one in antiquity seems to have doubted the existence of people like Theseus or Achilles, or events like the Trojan War. Yet the supernatural trappings of heroic legend caused unease, and some historians, notably Ephoros, dismissed everything that happened before the return of the Heraklids as fiction and/or unknowable.

This deep-seated ambivalence makes it very difficult to be confident of any definition of myth or history one might advance. A different approach may be suggested. Rather than tracing yet again the history of the terms and concepts in antiquity, or asking whether there is a *spatium mythicum* and *spatium historicum* in Herodotos and other writers, and if so, where they drew the line between them, let us look at the way stories of gods and heroes are used—in what contexts, in what ways, and to what purposes. Our two case studies will be Herodotos and Phanodemos, which will, of course, only scratch the surface of this vast topic, but may at least suggest some avenues for further exploration.

Before getting down to these cases, however, a few more preliminary remarks may be helpful.

MYTHISTORY

An important distinction is that between historians talking in their own (narrator's) voice about myth, and representing others talking about myth. The point may be illustrated from Xenophon. In his *Hellenica*, in imitation of his model Thucydides, Xenophon makes almost no reference to myths (trivial references at 3.1.8, 3.4.3, 7.1.34). In two places, however, myth comes to the fore, and in both of them the context is a speech. At 6.3.6 Kallias is attempting to persuade the Lakedaimonians to enter into a treaty with Athens, and at 6.5.47 Prokles of Phlios is attempting to persuade the Athenians to render assistance to the Lakedaimonians. Kallias reminds his audience that Triptolemos had initiated Herakles 'your archegete' and the Dioskouroi into the mysteries of Eleusis, the first foreigners to be initiated, and that the Lakedaimonians had been the first recipients of Demeter's corn from Triptolemos' hands. This proof of ancient goodwill between the two peoples should persuade them now to join the alliance. Prokles, for his part, appeals to the support given by the Athenians to the Argives when the Thebans refused burial to the Seven, and to the stand taken by the Athenians against Eurystheus in defence of the children of Herakles. These mythical incidents were central to the Athenian image of themselves as benefactors of mankind, a font of civilization, and defenders

of right even in the face of grave danger (Loraux 1986). We know, too, that appeals to mythical antecedents and ancient kinship were a common tactic in diplomatic negotiations (see for instance Hdt. 5.80, 7.150, 7.157–62, 7.169–70, 9.26–7). Such arguments appealed to the recipients' sense of identity at its very roots. There was no deeper grounding than these foundation stories, which provided the truest bearings in times of uncertainty.

This variable enunciation of myth in narrative suggests at least one important point. A prime function of myth is aetiology, the explanation of origins, often with reference to cults and festivals, but also, as mentioned, to other kinds of origin. History, too, is about origins and causes (*arche* denotes both in Greek; Hdt. 1.5). In Xenophon's other works, characters delight in invoking myths to point a moral, provide an exemplum, or ornament their remarks. Plato's dialogues, the essays of Plutarch, and, one may say, the whole output of the Second Sophistic, display a similar use of myth in cultivated conversation. So the sharp differentiation in the *Hellenica* between the myths Xenophon as narrator uses, and the myths his characters use, is a matter of choice. There were plenty of ways both he and Thucydides might have worked myth into their tale, had they been so minded. We do not expect philosophical justifications from Xenophon, but Thucydides explicitly appeals to a non-mythological notion of causation when, in his programmatic preface, he says that the truest reason for the war was Spartan fear of Athenian power (1.23.6). Herodotos' ideas of causation are quite different, and involve the directing hands of gods. This is not, however, because he was still in the grip of Myth (the upper case may distinguish the reified concept), from which later thinkers had struggled free. Abstract, untheological notions of cause were hardly new in his day. He made his choices for personal reasons as much as did Thucydides or Xenophon. Like Xenophon too, as we will see below, Herodotos distinguishes between narrator's and characters' myths.

If myths can be differently deployed by historians, this only reflects the variety of ways in which myth was deployed in ordinary life. Ordinary Greeks encountered myths in an astounding range of contexts (Buxton 1994). Greek literature being predominantly a public, male affair, we get only glimpses of story-telling in the private world of family and women, but these are enough to tell us that, from the earliest age, children heard myths for entertainment, as part of their education, and as a means to

participate in the public worship of the gods. A famous scene from Euripides' *Ion* (184–218) describes the delight of women visiting Delphi from Athens as they recognize in the temple sculptures the myths they have told each other over their spinning—Herakles, Bellerophon, the Battle of the Giants. People decorated their homes with vases depicting mythological stories. Festivals and holy places all had myths to explain their origin and character. Mythology decorated public buildings. Men, of an evening at the symposium, performed myth through song. Old men gathered socially in the *leschai* and swapped tales, often mythological (Buxton 1994: 40–4; Bremmer 2008: 166). Orators used myths to inspire their audiences. At the great Panhellenic gatherings, virtuoso epic poets vied for prizes. In Athens, a feast of mythology was consumed every year in the dramatic festivals.

Contact with mythology was ubiquitous. It was also different in character according to context. An obvious example is the difference between tragic and comic myth. Tragedy sets its stories in the remote past, a gap that is generally sustained but, with occasional powerful touches of realism, imaginatively bridged (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003); the nobility and grandeur of the characters, appropriate to the solemn themes, add to the sense of distance. In comedy, by contrast, heroes and gods keep company on stage with characters from the streets and countryside of Attica (Buxton 1994: 34–6). The ease and frequency of mythological references exceeds what other literature suggests was normal in ordinary life, reinforcing the feeling that all the heroes have come out of seclusion to enliven the carnival, present in the imagination if not on stage. If the two worlds of myth and reality are thoroughly commingled in comedy, that is because it is its business to break down all barriers. But the phenomenon also shows that the barriers were there to be broken, and that, in other contexts, the two worlds, though coexisting, could be held apart.

Another important general point is that many myths had an historical flavour. Myths, of course, are set in the past, but it is often a special, timeless past beyond normal experience (Mircea Eliade's '*illud tempus*', *that* time) (Eliade 1959). By contrast, many Greek myths of the gods, and even more of the heroes, were associated with specific places and times in the past of the living cities, giving these stories a marked proto-historical character. The elaborate genealogies of Greek heroic mythology imply a chronological framework which is already observed by the epic poets.

Nobles regarded themselves as descendants of the heroes. People knew the basic timeline of public history; in Athens, for instance, Theseus' bringing together of the scattered towns into a single polis, his synoikism, happened before the Trojan War, and, by definition, after the first beginnings of Attic life with its various kings. The first people to record Greek myth in prose, writers we now call mythographers, would have regarded themselves as historians; their large-scale works attempting to bring order to the genealogies and refine the chronology were a prominent part of the intellectual landscape of the fifth century BCE (Fowler 1996, 2000, 2013, and, in this volume, Willey, Chapter 6). If Greek myth was imbricated in Greek history in challenging ways even after intellectual discourse distinguished them, Greek history was already imbricated in Greek myth before this move was made.

If people were in continual contact with the past through mythology, this did not mean that there was a canonical narrative shared by everyone. On the contrary, Greek mythology was perpetually shifting, and versions of stories differed radically. A predominantly oral environment engendered such variety. Depending on circumstances and the eloquence of the story-teller, this or that version would be preferred. We can trace the change in many myths over time, and even if, in principle, people thought there should only be one *aition* (which may be doubted), while one myth was replacing another there would have been a period of transition in which two *aitia* were available (like Homeric formulae). As written literary culture became the norm, the number of variants on record reached amazing proportions, to provide learned poets like Callimachus (fr. 79a) or Ovid (e.g. *Fast*. 1.323–32, 5.3–7, 5.633–62) with riches to exploit not only for subject matter but for metapoetic effects. But this does not mean that the tolerance of plurality was any less in earlier times. We shall find further evidence below, in discussing Phanodemos, that this was the case.

With these preliminary points in mind let us turn to our two case studies.

HERODOTOS

The commonest use of myth in Herodotos is, unsurprisingly, to identify origins. With respect to nations he is notably consistent about this. Every Greek and every important barbarian nation has its origins explained, usually on first appearing in the *Histories* (the Medes and Persians are exceptions, but see 7.61–2). Prominent individuals in the *History* may receive the same treatment, notably Spartan kings, whose genealogy is carefully rehearsed (6.52, 7.204, 8.131; cf. Miltiades at 6.35).

This careful charting creates a vast canvas of the known world, a spatial map to complement the chronological framework Herodotos develops with equal care on the basis of his discoveries in Egypt. All human history is here accounted for. Epic grandeur meets the encyclopaedic urge to acquire total knowledge. The corners of such a map could only be pinned down by myths from the Urzeit, the primeval time.

An important point about Herodotos emerges here, however: for him, primeval time begins with the first human being. Another writer would have taken one more step backwards and told us who the gods were, from whom these original heroes were descended. But Herodotos is very sceptical about direct human interaction with gods; when such stories come into his narrative he carefully marks them as what other people say (Fowler 2010, and, in this volume, Willey, Chapter 6). In explaining the origin of the Scythians, for instance, he first gives us the Scythian story, that the first man was Targitaos, son of Zeus and a daughter of the river Borysthenes: ‘this is what they say, but I do not believe it’ (4.5). Next we get the Greek version, about Herakles and a snake-woman (4.8–10): Herakles was returning with the cattle of Geryon, fetched from beyond Ocean, which ‘the Greeks say’ is a stream flowing around the earth, ‘but they cannot demonstrate the fact’. A third, much more realistic tale is the one Herodotos emphatically prefers (4.11).

A revealing case is that of Aphetai. In telling us how this place in Thessaly got its name (the point from which the Argonauts ‘set out’ in the Argo to fetch the Golden Fleece), Herodotos notes that this is where ‘it is said’ Herakles was left behind by Jason (7.193). A particular indication of his scepticism is his use of the word *koas* to denote the Fleece. This is the *mot juste* in the poetic tradition, and instantly brings to mind all the fantastic elements of the tale as the poets told it. The name of the Argo, well known for its magical quality, has a similar effect in this passage. Contrast the realistic motive given at 1.2 (the Greeks who went to Colchis

were merchants—no mention of Jason or the Argo). This is a subtle but telling indication that a sense of Myth is emerging.

This pattern of signalling incredulity by attributing such tales to others is consistent enough to be relied on. It is confirmed by the converse: where Herodotos relates a heroic legend in his own voice it never contains any fantastical elements, and has sometimes demonstrably been purged of them (for instance, the Helen *logos* at 2.113–20, where the gods have been written out of the narrative). One may include, as examples of myths told 'in his own voice', those cases where Herodotos is arguing a thesis that is clearly his own, but where he cites, at the same time, local authorities to support his case. An example of this mixture would again be the Helen *logos*, where he claims the testimony of Egyptian priests as evidence for what is, in all essentials, his own argument. It is valid everywhere, so far as I can see, that no story containing miraculous elements is delivered in the narrator's own voice, with the understandable exception of omens and oracles, in which Herodotos, like most Greeks, believed implicitly.

Thus far we have been discussing myths which, in a broad sense, account for origins of things. We have noted a pattern of enunciation (whether in the narrator's voice or attributed to others), and its link to Herodotos' attitude to myth. Both the notion of cause (*arche*) and the removal of supernatural elements link directly to the second major use of myth in Herodotos, which is to illustrate historiographical principles.

The first example comes right at the beginning of the *Histories*, where Phoenician and Persian accounts of the cause (*arche*) of the war are rehearsed and dismissed. The stories involve characters from Greek myth (Io, Europe, Medea, Helen). It is sometimes said that they are dismissed *qua* mythical, but this is too hasty a conclusion. If Herodotos attributes a story to somebody else, the grounds of disbelief are often that the story contains fabulous elements, as we have seen. In the present case, such elements have been, as usual, expurgated, but this creates a conundrum: Who could seriously think that Persians and Phoenicians argued thus not only about Greek myths, but about rationalized Greek myths? To sidestep that problem for a moment, it is hard to see what purpose Herodotos would have in cleansing these stories of gods if he was never going to believe them anyway. Much easier to pass them on in their traditional form, and say that he did not believe them for that reason. This would be a straightforwardly comprehensible procedure.

It is important to note that Herodotos takes these arguments seriously enough to rebut them. These are the kinds of argument that *might* be advanced on the basis of traditional myth, once it has been put into a shape such that it can be discussed rationally at all. About myths in their usual form there is simply no point arguing; everybody's opinion has equal validity (see Hdt. 2.3). Maybe he had some reason for thinking that the Persians and Phoenicians would subscribe to these arguments; it is also probable that Herodotos is here responding, as so often, to somebody else's theory (Fowler 1996: 83–6). Be that as it may, the crucial thing is the reason for the rejection: that about these stories there can be no certain *knowledge*; for his part, he will begin the discussion with Croesus, who is the first of those whom he *knows* to have harmed the Greeks (1.5).

He does not turn his back on Myth, then, at least in the first instance, but on what is unknowable. But unknowability is a serious disadvantage in a tale that would claim to be historical. Herodotos' move is surely significant from that point of view. If the principle of unknowability were pressed, it would have the effect of turning the Greek myths into Myth. Before long, it did. But how does this assessment of the prologue square with the Helen *logos* of 2.113–20, where Herodotos clearly accepts her historicity? In Book 1, the Helen story is presented as part of a chain of events which present numerous difficulties both in themselves and in what they are collectively meant to prove. It is one thing to say that Io was an ordinary woman, and to disbelieve her metamorphosis into a cow (Herodotos would not have believed that either); but the suggestion that she was kidnapped by Phoenician sailors is pure guesswork, and beyond verification. Also unverifiable is the suggestion that Paris conceived his desire for a Greek wife because he thought he would not have to make amends. The principle of verifiability and, even more important, of falsifiability is explicit in his rejection of the Ocean theory of the flooding of the Nile (2.21–3: 'I do not know' that Ocean exists; the theory 'has no refutation'; 'some poet' like Homer must have made it up). There may be no reason to doubt the *existence* of Paris and Helen, but one must base what one says about them on evidence and reason. Herodotos' analysis of the story in Book 2 fits this requirement, and furnishes a second example of his use of myth to clarify historiographical principles. He concludes that Helen could not have been at Troy; she was in Egypt all along. If she had been at Troy, the Trojans would have been mad not to give her up. The

Greeks did not, however, believe them when they said she wasn't there. (The story of the phantom Helen at Troy is passed over with silent contempt.) The story is first made susceptible to rational analysis by conversion to realistic form; the gods, and things like phantoms, are removed. Herodotos then studies its inner logic and brings external evidence to bear in order to derive an historical conclusion.

Perhaps the real inconsistency between the two accounts of Helen is that Herodotos criticizes his unnamed source for surmises of the sort that he so often provides himself in compiling his history. But, of course, Herodotos thought his surmises reasonable, and his opponent's arbitrary. Which of us does not think the same?

PHANODEMOS

The great, surviving historians and their grand themes tend to claim the attention of modern readers, but if significance were to be measured by quantity rather than quality, the many lost 'local historians'—those who compiled the histories of individual cities, both their own and others—would take pride of place. In Felix Jacoby's standard collection of historians known to us only by fragments (Jacoby 1923–58), over 700 writers are edited in Part III, histories of cities and peoples. Pride in local tradition is as old as the Hellenic world; the vast mosaic that is the epic tradition springs ultimately from such traditions, and was perpetually enriched by them. There were stories about landmarks, institutions, and cults, the arrival or autochthony of the first inhabitants, subsequent immigrations, the deeds of the great families at Thebes and Troy, the exploits of heroes venerated in the city's shrines, and much else. Poets and priests were the earliest keepers of this lore who had a public face, but many members of leading families would have been well informed, and, for all we know, the curious antiquarian, neither poet nor priest, who went out of his way to learn the city's traditions could be older than the beginnings of prose history. Herodotos' *logioi andres*, 'talkers' whom he cites several times as authorities (Hdt. 1.1, 4.46, cf. 2.3, 2.77; Luraghi 2001, 2006), might be seen as such people.

Authors who recorded the early history of their city obviously had their fellow citizens in mind as one readership. At the same time, a foreign readership was also targeted, for part of the point was to make a wider audience aware of the city's impressive achievements. Local heroes would find a place in Panhellenic myth, and, coming the other way, stories heard from travelling bards or during visits abroad might put down local roots. This local–international dialogue is visible throughout antiquity. As the world became increasingly globalized, first in the wake of Alexander's conquests and then the Roman, the cities' jockeying for position became all the more energetic. The relationship between local and 'great' history was more complex than a simple dichotomy of parochial antiquarianism versus universal history would suggest (Clarke 2008).

Myths were a big part of this conversation, but their unreliability was a recognized problem. They always retained their value as moral exemplars, but some harder form of truth was needed if myth was to serve historical purposes. In surviving writers like Dionysios of Halikarnassos or Livy we can see some of the manoeuvres adopted to make myths usable. Contradictions are resolved by logical analysis; authoritative writers are privileged; hidden meanings are extracted by rationalization or allegorization; prosaic truth may be distilled from a story's overall tendency. Above all, the result had to make sense in the light of current realities. Here, the ancient writers almost seem to know by instinct what modern students of oral tradition have so amply documented—that such traditions are perpetually modified in the light of contemporary experience, and only those that have some purchase on a society's beliefs and values survive (Vansina 1965, 1985; Henige 1982; Thomas 1989). If a given tradition is seen to be powerful, the very fact that so many people believe it must count for something. This living commitment to tradition may be what made kinship diplomacy work even if doubts might attend the details of the genealogies; if a whole people is prepared to say, in all sincerity, 'we believe we are your family', it is a strong argument for making an alliance.

In fragmentary writers we may assume similar manoeuvres, but quotations are rarely extensive enough for us to witness them. There were also, no doubt, fundamentalists who straightforwardly believed in the myths, and others who remained agnostic even while setting down the traditions. A change in the practice of mythography, as instanced by the

surviving *Library* of Apollodoros (perhaps second century CE), is, however, revealing. Whereas the proto-historical mythographers of the Classical period began their books with the first humans, Apollodoros begins with the theogony. What was myth is now Myth, and the gods are part of it. Local historians made more and more room for recherché and marvellous tales, and new genres sprang up that specialized in them. Words like *mytheuousi*, 'people tell the story/myth that . . .', become frequent in the prehistoric stretches of both local and universal history (e.g. Agathocles *FGrHist* 472 F 1; ubiquitous in Diodorus of Sicily). On the other hand, the Parian Marble, a chronicle composed in 264/3 BCE, calmly assigns dates to divine doings, such as Demeter's gift of corn to man in 1409/8 (*FGrHist* 239 A 12). Taken at face value, this implies a startlingly literal belief, without a whisper of doubt: Is this aggressive denial of the problem, or blithe indifference? It could not be ignorance, since a scholar was required to put the chronicle together; but however one may answer the question posed about his belief, whatever he thought he was doing, it was not history in the manner even of a Herodotos, much less a Polybios.

One problem in myths that could not be ignored was their multiplicity. Like the early mythographers, writers of local history sought to identify (or establish) the true variant among many. The attempt may seem futile, and we might choose to smile at their naiveté (as if the habit has died out among scholars). Yet by taking a step back and surveying their activity as a whole we might make a different point about the tolerance of plurality the situation implies—not among individual writers, but in society at large. This, in turn, may suggest something about the relationship of myth to history.

Phanodemos of Athens was not the most distinguished of Atthidographers (historians of Attica), at least in terms of frequency of citation by later scholars, but his enthusiasm for mythology and traditional attitude may have been more in tune with the majority of ordinary readers than (say) the rationalization of the better known Philochoros. Phanodemos was politically active in mid- to late fourth-century BCE Athens, and was known particularly for piety (Harding 2008: 8). Such a reputation accords very well with the image his *Atthis* projects. Fragment after fragment dwells on shrines and monuments, local cults and festivals, setting the record straight and delighting in obscure facts and aetiologies.

It does not seem accidental that only three of the surviving quotations treat the historical period (frr. 22–4 Jacoby *FGrHist* 325 = 127, 123, 120 Harding). Phanodemos' contemporary fourth-century BCE world is nowhere to be seen. Of course, it was there in the background, after all, the Battle of Chaeronea, the decisive Macedonian victory over the southern Greeks, took place in his lifetime, 338 BCE. Assuming Phanodemos was writing after this cataclysmic event, one might be tempted to read his *Atthis* as escapist; yet, if one assumes its author hoped for a readership wider than other Athenians of similar tastes, one might suppose he wished to remind the Macedonian conquerors of Athens' immense antiquity, prestige, and contribution to civilization.

Phanodemos' chauvinism is certainly clear from the fragments. He insists that the rape of Persephone took place in Attica, not Sicily or Crete or anywhere else (fr. 27 Jacoby = 44 and 77 Harding). He uniquely adds Admetos and Alkestis to the list of those succoured by Athens, like the children of Herakles or the mothers of the Seven against Thebes (fr. 26 Jacoby = 82 Harding). According to Phanodemos, not only was the city of Sais in Egypt founded by Athenian emigrants (fr. 25 Jacoby), but the race of the Hyperboreans was named after an Athenian Hyperboreus (fr. 29 Jacoby). Teucer too, eponym of the Teucrians (Trojans), hailed from Athens (fr. 13 Jacoby = 3 Harding). The original name of Delos, Ortygia, was bestowed because of an incident in the life of the Athenian hero Erysichthon (fr. 2 Jacoby = 28 Harding). Phanodemos probably also claimed, in defiance of the entire epic tradition, that the Greek fleet sailed to Troy not from Aulis in Boiotia, but from Brauron in Attica (fr. 14 Jacoby = 278 Harding; see Jacoby *ad loc*.).

It is hard to think that anyone outside Athens would have believed such bold claims, but it would be unwise to infer that the audience was therefore Athenian. In fr. 8 Jacoby = 275 Harding Phanodemos tells us that the Leokoreion was in the middle of the Kerameikos; as Athenians would not need to be told this, the fragment shows that the implied, and no doubt the real, audience included non-Athenians.

Some fragments, to be sure, do seem more clearly of interest to Athenians alone, such as the *aition* for the festival of the Choes (fr. 1 Jacoby = 88 Harding), the early history of the Areopagos (fr. 10 Jacoby = 34 Harding), or details of the cult of Artemis Kolainis (fr. 3 Jacoby = 232 Harding). It is in such fragments as these, however, that one gains some

insight into the nature of multiple traditions. One expects Athenians to contradict non-Athenians. One expects scholars to contradict other scholars. But some of Phanodemos' discussions suggest not just learned arguments or the filling of inconsequential gaps in an otherwise stable record, but fundamental instability and multiplicity as the norm within the same community. The Tritopatores are a case in point (fr. 6 Jacoby = 5 Harding). The same entry in Harpokration cites not only Phanodemos, but the slightly later Atthidographers, Demon (*FGrHist* 327 F 2) and Philochoros (328 F 182), each with incompatible or ill-consorting explanations. The cult was widespread and homely, a worship of ancestors for the prosperity of their progeny (Harding 2008: 18). One infers, first, that the ancestors in question were but vaguely defined; second, that ordinary worshippers were free to supply their own understanding, if they thought about it at all; and, thirdly, that it was not important that everybody agree.

Another disagreement concerns the Eleusinian goddess Daeira (fr. 15 Jacoby = 279 Harding). Phanodemos said that she was identical with Aphrodite, and she, in turn, with Demeter. Pausanias the Atticist (second century CE) rejected this idea, on the grounds that the two goddesses, Demeter and Daeira, were regarded as inimical to each other, and the former's priestess would not attend the latter's sacrifices. One might have thought such a basic ritual prescription would have been known to Phanodemos. Perhaps, then, Pausanias' information is wrong; but other Athenian sources exist which display equally stark divergence about this figure. Aischylos said she was the same as Persephone (fr. 277 Radt); his contemporary Pherecydes said she was sister of Styx, surely the daughter of Ocean (fr. 45 Fowler); Aristophanes said she was mother of Semele (fr. 804 Kassel-Austin). Yet more guesses can be found in the ancient commentators, most of which will depend ultimately on Athenian sources (Fowler 2013: 16). Perhaps the secrecy of the Eleusinian mysteries was to blame for some of this confusion, but it is hard to believe that all of it was; the shared knowledge of the many initiates would have acted as a brake on this plainly rampant speculation. One more plausibly supposes nonchalance about aetiological conformity in a ritual context.

Another example is the explanation of the name of the Palladion, the court to the south-east of the Acropolis at which cases of involuntary homicide were heard (on the Palladion see also, in this volume, Scheer,

Chapter 12). Two main myths are attested, one from Kleidemos (*FGrHist* 323 F 20) and the other from Phanodemos (fr. 16 Jacoby = 87 Harding), who was probably correcting his predecessor's account. Both stories involve a fight between Athenians and Argives returning from Troy, as a result of which the Palladion, the talismanic statue of Athena, fell into Athenian hands. Kleidemos' version, in which the Athenian king Demophon deliberately attacks the Argives in order to gain possession of the Palladion, is less flattering than Phanodemos', in which the Athenians mistook the Argives for enemies. This improvement in the interests of Athens' good name seems appropriate for the patriotic Phanodemos. Sourvinou-Inwood (2011: 225–62) argues that both these stories were invented in the fourth century BCE. That the myth could change so rapidly within a few years is remarkable. Once again, it might be easy to dismiss this as two scholars arguing amongst themselves about a variant that had no real purchase in the *imaginaire* of ordinary people. Yet, as Sourvinou-Inwood documents, there were other, earlier stories about how the Palladion came to Athens, one of which was quite possibly dramatized in tragedy—broadcast, that is, to thousands of Athenians, either as a new invention (Scullion 1999–2000; Seaford 2009) or as a reflection of something already in public circulation. The aetiology for the other courts was just as messy (Jacoby on *FGrHist* 323a F 1; MacDowell 1963, 1978: 113–18; Harrison 1968–1971 2: 36–43; Rhodes 1981 on *Ath. Pol*. 57.2–3; Harding 2008: 206–7).

The aetiological chaos hinted at by these fragments suggests a world in which plurality of explanation was the norm (Veyne 1988). When Herodotos refers, as he frequently does, to variant traditions, sometimes leaving the choice open, he is unique among historians and mythographers, who typically pretend that theirs is the only version. Herodotos may more honestly reflect lay discourse about the past. In this environment mythistory might, in different contexts and for different purposes, resolve into either myth or history, but without eliding the other altogether. Authority might flow from any number of competing sources and from immediate exigencies. Aetiology would adapt continually without the differences being noticed. The basic question, is this story myth or history, would not arise very often at all, and the trigger for asking it might not always be the same. In intellectual discourse, taking a stand on the issue of myth versus history was unavoidable, but, then as now, they

cannot be separated at the fundamental level: each needs the other. On the other hand, when myth becomes Myth it can be treated with a certain distance, however illusory; it can be studied as a phenomenon, and strategies of interpretation can be developed that are, if not unique to myth, highly appropriate to it (allegory, rationalization in antiquity, a plethora of theories in modern times). These, in turn, develop autonomous discourses with their own history, yielding other insights into the human imagination and the world it experiences.

CONCLUSION

Understanding myth as it relates to history needs to be studied not only in historiography but with regard to the experience of the society which hosts the historiography. Some aspects of ordinary Greek experience of myth as history have been noted here, but there is much scope for further study. The picture is anything but tidy: the mix of mythistory changes from context to context, individual to individual. Among historians, too, there is a range of attitudes. Patterns of explanation prevailing in poetry and mythology continued in different guises in the historians; Herodotos' cyclical view of history is inherited from Archaic Greece, and even so sober a historian as Thucydides can be analysed mythically (Cornford 1907). At the same time, personal choice plays a large role in the historian's stance.

In the more overtly scientific Hellenistic age the tenor of discourse changed, but it is doubtful whether the substance did. History still occupied the high ground of truth but myth refused to abandon its assault, relying on the fifth column already inside the enemy camp. Myth played the long game, until, in our time, it has not so much won, in the sense of ousting history from the high ground (though some would think it has), as in the sense of having put paid to the metaphor and redefined the landscape. History and myth each has their legitimate claim to truth and need to work together. Future ages may see this stance as ideological, as no doubt it is, but for the moment it seems like progress.

Suggested Reading

Morley 1999 is an excellent overview of issues in the theory of history; Csapo 2005 for theories of mythology. Fowler 1996, 2000, and 2013 explore the interface of Greek mythography and historiography in the formative fifth century BCE. Buxton 1994 is indispensable for the contexts of mythology; Buxton 2009 continues the exploration. Clarke 2008 is a superb study of Hellenistic local history, and Harding 2008 is an accessible and authoritative treatment of the Atthidographers. For Herodotos, the two handbooks Bakker, de Jong, and van Wees 2002 and Dewald and Marincola 2006 provide rich resources for further study. On his prologue, see Węcowski 2004 and Nicolai 2012, though with somewhat different emphases.

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CHAPTER 15

PHILOSOPHY

RICK BENITEZ AND HAROLD TARRANT

INTRODUCTION

THE study of the dialectic between philosophy and religion in antiquity informs us about how religion was conceived and how philosophers contributed to the development of religious thinking. We review the philosophy and religion dialectic from the end of the sixth century BCE to the second century CE, focusing more on theology, mythology, and personal religious experience, than on cult practices of polis and *oikos*. In general, philosophers accepted that conventional religion had an essential place in Greek culture. Competition arose rather where concepts and assumptions underlying religious practice appeared to conflict with reason. Such competition has been viewed in terms of antagonism between philosophy and religion. In this chapter, we stress the interrelation of philosophy and religion, paying special attention to how some philosophers incorporated religious thought into their own views. In the case of Plato, this inevitably also includes the incorporation of religious practice and experience.

We begin by reviewing the supposed opposition between philosophy and religion, in order to put into question the very distinction it presupposes. This is followed by more detailed case studies that show philosophy and religion in closer proximity. We focus on Xenophanes, Plato, and later Platonism, on the grounds that these reveal the most pertinent interactions between religious culture and philosophical thinking.

WERE PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION OPPOSED IN THEIR ORIGINS?

It is difficult to pinpoint how and when Greek philosophers first diverged from poets, seers, and other persons of religious significance. Many contemporary accounts follow Aristotle (*Metaph*. A, N) in treating the philosophers from Miletos (Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, all early to mid-sixth century BCE) as establishing a new conceptual framework, based on natural processes and substances (e.g. Curd and Graham 2008: 3–21). According to the Aristotelian perspective, the Milesians naturalized divine powers and divine beings, and the dialectic between religion and philosophy began in criticism rather than constructive engagement. The Aristotelian perspective distorts our view of religion and philosophy, however, and it does so in three ways: (1) by mistaking what philosophy was in its origins, (2) by ignoring the religious persons and practices most appropriate for comparison, and (3) by presenting a picture more coherent than the evidence allows.

The first distortion results from Aristotle's selective presentation of evidence. For example, his decision to place Thales among those he calls 'physicists' (because of his belief that water is the spring of all things, *Met*. 983b20) rather than among the sages (because of his connection with Delphic injunctions, cf. Pl. *Prt*. 343a), underscores his concern with natural substance. Hence, Aristotle gives no information about Thales' association with Delphi—an association central to understanding the earliest relations between philosophy and religion. When Aristotle presents philosophers' explanations of phenomena such as eclipses,

lightning, and earthquakes, he makes them part of a project distinct from religious attempts to account for the unknown. Accordingly, even when Aristotle reports that Thales 'thought that all things are full of gods' (*De an*. 411a8), or that Anaximander regarded the infinite as 'divine' (*Ph*. 203b11), he takes that as a manner of speaking. The beliefs of early philosophers were more complicated than that, however. For example, Aristophanes' *Clouds* (247–407) imputes inconsistency to them, both with regard to belief in traditional gods and to religious attitudes towards unconventional deities. The Derveni Papyrus, which perhaps dates to the fifth century BCE, reinterprets Orphic theology in a rationalizing and naturalistic manner, but in a way that remains 'religious' in an important sense, involving souls, *daimones* (this volume, Sfameni Gasparro, Chapter 28), Bacchoi, and ritualistic practices (Betegh 2004; Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006).

A common correction of this distortion acknowledges that the Milesian philosophers, and those who succeeded them, took religious expressions seriously. It has been suggested (Drozdek 2007) that the early philosophers did not repudiate core ideas of traditional religion so much as reinterpret them intellectually. This view is more consistent with our sources than the sharp division between naturalism and religion. Nevertheless, it still treats the views of the philosophers as fundamentally critical of the poets and religious figures who came before them. Moreover, in regarding the earliest thinkers as self-consciously theological, this view is anachronistic: the term *theologia* does not appear before Plato (*Resp*. 379a5, where it means only 'speech about gods'), and it is not until Aristotle that we find a technical word for 'theology' (*theologike: Metaph*. 1026a19, 1064b3).

The second way that the Aristotelian perspective distorts the relation between religion and philosophy involves that from which philosophy is supposed to have become distinct. Aristotle fails to contextualize the Presocratics in terms of their contemporaries. Rather, he distinguishes them from 'the ancient poets' (*Metaph*. 1091b4). He barely mentions (*Metaph*. 1091b8–9) figures who mixed philosophy with religion, such as Pherecydes of Syros (mid-sixth century BCE), and does not mention at all other figures whom we now know to have been engaged in allegorical interpretation of myths, like the author of the Derveni Papyrus, or Metrodoros of Lampsakos (on these 'hybrid' philosophers see Granger 2007). In fact, Greek philosophical speculation adopted and developed

hermeneutical practices that began in religious contexts, with the interpretation of dreams, signs, and oracles (Grondin 1994: 214–18). These practices, involving allegory, criticism, gnomic utterance, and exegesis, were broadened in the fifth century BCE by cults, rhapsodes, sophists, and historians, as well as philosophers. Once the shared interest in *interpretation* is recognized, one cannot sort philosophers and theologians into neat Aristotelian categories. When Aristotle claims that 'there is nothing in common between Homer and Empedokles except the meter' (*Poet*. 1447b17–18), he misses the chronological point: there is much in common between Empedokles—with his interest in myth, revelation, and purification—and the religious thinkers of his own day (see Martin and Primavesi 1999).

This leads to the third Aristotelian distortion. By separating those he regards as philosophers from others among their contemporaries, Aristotle both ignores the ubiquity of 'theological' interest among sixth- and fifth-century BCE intellectuals, and overstates the uniformity among those he takes for philosophers. For instance, he has little to say about Xenophanes as a philosopher, mentioning him only three times in connection with philosophy (*Cael*. 294a23; *Metaph*. 986b21, 986b27). Though he recognizes Xenophanes as a philosopher (*Metaph*. 986b21), Aristotle says that he 'makes nothing clear' and is 'rather crude' (*agroikoteros*). Consequently, Lesher (1992: 191) claimed that Xenophanes 'does not really belong in a discussion of the principles of nature'. If we were to view Xenophanes and a few other early 'philosophers' like him as not belonging squarely within Aristotle's grouping, we could see a richer beginning to the dialectic between philosophy and religion, a beginning which better explains Plato's intense engagement with religion, as well as some post-Aristotelian developments.

In what follows, we look at three case studies that help to correct the distortion introduced by the Aristotelian perspective. Our case study of Xenophanes shows how difficult it is to pigeonhole some Presocratics as either philosophers or religious thinkers. Xenophanes raises questions about the origin and attributes of the gods, and about what is tolerable to believe they do. Closely connected are his doubts about knowledge of divine things. Yet his questions and doubts can be seen to fit with religious circumspection and humility.

Our case study of Plato shows how he builds upon the kind of thinking found in Xenophanes. With Plato, we see the first clear evidence of positive theology. Yet even as Plato supplies rational grounds for the religious speculation that preceded him, religious concepts and practices continue to provide the framework for many of his philosophical ideas. We show this through the close association of Plato's epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics with concepts inherited from Greek religion. We show, further, how these three strands of Plato's thought are fused in conceptions about the soul and the afterlife to such an extent that personal religious experience becomes the focus of later Platonic philosophy.

Our third case study, devoted to imperial Platonism and cognate movements, shows how thinkers after Plato were able to achieve a remarkable reconciliation of philosophy and religion by means of the philosophico-religious ideas they found in Plato. Our conclusion is that not only were philosophy and religion *not* opposed in their origin, but there was continuous interaction and integration of religious and philosophical thinking from Presocratic philosophy to Neoplatonism.

CASE STUDIES

Xenophanes

Xenophanes of Colophon has generally been characterized as an Ionian physicist, and there is evidence in the fragments and testimonia of his interest in natural phenomena and the source (*arche*) of existing things (see DK 11 B 27–32). Yet this may indicate only that Xenophanes was 'imbued with the spirit of Ionian *historie*' (Lesher 1992: 4), which suffused late sixth-century BCE reflection. Xenophanes was also a poet, as extant elegies show. These are formally and substantially poetic—they offer the sort of observations on religious, moral, and cultural matters that were squarely within the poet's brief (see esp. B1–2).

Xenophanes' perspective on his subject matter is difficult to place exclusively in either the poet's or the philosopher's territory. His criticism

of contemporaries and predecessors in the so-called *silloi*, or satirical, fragments (B10–22), accords with late sixth-century BCE poetic practice. Yet in Xenophanes we find the earliest traces of sceptical tropes (e.g. repeated deployment of counterfactual conditionals to provoke doubt: B15, 34, 38). It might be safest, then, to treat Xenophanes as one whose thoughts about the divine and about human reason challenge philosophers and poets alike (Hermann 2004: 135–6).

The fragments of Xenophanes that concern divine nature fall into three overlapping groups: those that criticize poetic accounts about divine behaviour (10–12), those that criticize anthropomorphism (B14–16), and those that describe divine nature directly (B23–6). Lesher (1992: 83) suggests that a conception of divine perfection underlies all three groups. Thus, God is described as 'greatest' (*megistos*, B23), 'whole' (*oulos*, B24), 'completely without toil' (*apaneuthe*, B25), and 'ever in the same' (*aei de en tautoi*, B26). From this point of view, it makes sense to reprove Homer and Hesiod for saying that the gods commit murder, theft, and adultery (B11–12, cf. B10), and to ridicule mortals for thinking gods wear human clothing (B14), regardless of whether these criticisms imply that there are not multiple gods, or that the gods do not interact at all.

Xenophanes' attack on anthropomorphism presents us with an interesting alternative, however. The source of his attack may not be a conception of divine perfection, so much as exposure to diverse cultural representations (on which see, in this volume, Scheer, Chapter 12). Thus, Xenophanes notes (B16) that 'the Ethiopians claim that their gods are flat-nosed and dark; the Thracians that theirs have grey eyes and light hair'. While these different attributes are not logically incompatible, they present contrasting appearances, and Xenophanes may have meant to indicate that gods cannot, at the same time, look like both Ethiopians and Thracians. If that is so, then the historical circumstances of Xenophanes' exile from Colophon (DL 9.18.1) and his subsequent travels as a wandering poet, may have contributed to his thinking.

If that was how the thought began, however, it was soon extended. What is implicit in fr. 16—that the Ethiopians and Thracians fashion gods after their own image—becomes explicit in frr. 14–15. In B15 Xenophanes, at his imaginative best, states that 'if horses or oxen or lions had hands to draw with' each group would draw the figures of gods so as to be just like themselves. This fragment takes the thought of B16 further, not just by

making anthropomorphism explicit, but by suggesting that the conceptual propensities of species are natural rather than cultural. In B14 Xenophanes takes the idea even further, reporting that people think that gods wear the same clothing as they do, 'but' (*alla*) this is merely a matter of 'supposition' (*dokeousi*), like the thought that gods are born, or have voices and bodies.

The rejection of anthropomorphism has consequences for Xenophanes' view of divine nature. The 'one God' of B23, is 'not in any way like mortals in body or in thought'. This suggests that the apparent perfections, 'greatest', 'complete', and 'aloof' should be understood negatively, by contrast with the ordinary, incomplete, mundane existence of mortals. Indeed, the fragments that deal with divine nature, if taken literally, are inconsistent with Xenophanes' anti-anthropomorphism. To suggest that God literally 'sees', 'hears', or 'thinks' (B24, cf. B25) is to picture God the way that a sentient species might. A more consistent interpretation treats these attributions negatively: God does not see, think, or hear at all as we do. Similarly, in B25, the way that God 'shakes' (*kradainai*) all things is 'completely without toil' (*apaneuthe ponoio*), that is, in no way familiar to us. All of this suggests that it is not so much a positive conception of divine perfection that underlies Xenophanes' 'theology' as awareness of the limits of human understanding.

This way of looking at Xenophanes is supported by the fragments concerning human reason (B18, 34–6). We noted above that human thoughts about the divine are merely a matter of supposition (B14). Yet as poor as our faculties are—and there is 'no man who sees clearly nor will there be anyone who knows'—still, 'supposition is universally available' (*dokos d' epi pasi tetuktai*, B34). Supposition gives men an intellectual foothold, albeit a tenuous one, for though 'the gods did not trace out the pattern (*hypedeixan*) of all things for mortals from the start, in time and by searching they find things out better' (B18). Thus, one might ultimately reach the point where things can 'be supposed (*dedoxastho*) to be like (*eoikota*) unto the real things (*tois etymoisi*)' (B35), at least for 'as many things as [the gods] have made apparent (*pephenasin*) to mortal sight' (B36). Yet even if the likeness were perfect, one would not know it (B34). The overall position here is intellectual modesty in the face of something beyond our understanding.

Implications.

The character of Xenophanes' thoughts about divine nature and our understanding of it is more poetic than philosophical. If there is a concept of divine perfection underlying Xenophanes' 'theology', it is a negative one, emphasizing our own temporal, physical, and intellectual imperfections. Nevertheless, Xenophanes was an impetus for future thinking about divine perfection, if not by Parmenides and later Presocratics, then at least by Plato. It is hard to read the arguments of *Republic* 377–83 without suspecting Xenophanes' influence. There, Plato systematically covers the same ground of divine behaviour (377–80) and divine nature (380–3): he criticizes Hesiod, Homer, and other poets for implying that gods do evil things and take on human form. The differences are that Plato develops a positive conception of divine perfection founded upon the attributes of goodness (379b) and simplicity (380d), that he argues deductively from these attributes to conclusions that seem inescapable, and that he connects the conception of the gods' moral goodness with the metaphysical conception of their simplicity through the notion of 'best condition' (*aristos echein*). Thus, Plato affirms what Xenophanes cannot: 'God is absolutely simple and true in word and deed' (382e8), but perhaps he could not have said that without Xenophanes before him.

Plato

Plato holds a vital position in the reason-and-religion dialectic, because of the underpinning he gives to 'theology' that precedes him (as mentioned) and in terms of the significance of Platonic religion for those who came later (as we show in the next section). In this section, we emphasize the fundamental role of religion in determining the shape of Platonic philosophy.

Religious themes are found everywhere in Plato's dialogues. At the broadest level, this results inevitably from his depiction of a society 'permeated' by religion (Morgan 1992: 227). A deliberate emphasis, however, appears in connection with the trial of Sokrates, which figures prominently in the dialogues. Sokrates was accused of 'not recognizing'

the gods of the polis (*Ap*. 24c1), and his subsequent conviction shows how far relations between philosophy and religion had broken down. Platonic philosophy can be viewed as an elaborate effort to repair them.

Plato makes no effort to hide Sokrates' criticism of the content of traditional myths (*Euthyphr*. 6a); rather, the repeated defence of it in the *Republic* (377–92) and *Laws* (886) suggests his own commitment. Yet he does not pursue these criticisms as an attack on religion, or deny outright the existence of the Olympian gods, titans, demigods, heroes, or other significant figures of Greek mythology. On the contrary, they are frequently acknowledged in his writings. In the political programme of the *Laws* there are prescriptions for districts, temples, festivals, games, cults, and priesthoods dedicated to traditional deities, and he refers widely elsewhere to prayer, sacrifice, divination, and other services to the gods (on which, see Mikalson 2010). By contrast, some of Plato's most severe ridicule is levelled at natural philosophy, at least whenever it does not begin with something divine, such as a divine mind, a world soul, or a creator God (*Phd*. 96–100; *Phlb*. 27–8; *Leg*. 886–900; cf. *Ti*. 27–9). In stark opposition to materialism, Plato supports the traditional view that the sun, moon, and other celestial bodies are gods (*Leg*. 886–9; *Ti*. 38–40; *Resp*. 508a), and he persistently deploys myths that refer to familiar Greek gods and divinities (*Grg*. 523–7; *Phd*. 107–14; *Resp*. 614–21; *Phd*. 246–59; *Ti*. 27–92; *Plt*. 269–74).

Some have asserted that Plato produced myths for the 'less philosophically inclined' (Partenie 2009: 7–10), or that he regarded polis religion as the 'handmaid of philosophy' (Fraenkel 2013: 58–69), but those terms suggest a view of religion as adventitious propaganda that we regard as inconsistent with the tenor of Plato's life and writings. Rather, Plato was himself a person of deeply religious temperament, who considered religion, myth, and even argument as heuristic for all people, philosophically inclined or otherwise: many of the myths are described as worth believing, and not just by those who are philosophically inept (*Meno* 86b; *Grg*. 526d; *Phdr*. 114d; *Resp*. 621b).

Plato expresses much of his thought in the framework of pre-existing religious traditions and categories. For instance, the theory of recollection, that cornerstone of Platonic epistemology, is introduced in the *Meno* in the context of a religious view, promulgated by 'priests and priestesses' (81a10), that the soul is immortal, yet tainted with guilt that can only be

expiated through a reverent (*hosios*) life. There is a parallel between guilt and expiation, on the one hand, and amnesia and recollection on the other. Thus, it has often been pointed out that the theory of recollection draws on Orphic or Pythagorean sources (Bluck 1961 274–83; Morgan 1992: 237). This context is far-reaching, for the reverent life turns out to be a philosophico-religious one. The *Theaetetus* describes it as 'becoming righteous and holy (*hosion*) with wisdom (*phronesis*)', with 'likeness unto god' as the goal (176b1–2). In such a life, divine inspiration is frequently a source of vision and understanding (*Ap*. 33c; *Meno* 99e; *Phd*. 84a6–b2; *Phdr*. 262d; *Phlb*. 20b; *Cra*. 425d), and prayer is efficacious, either in inducing an appropriately devout cognitive attitude, or in actually obtaining the help of the gods to make discoveries (*Phdr*. 278b; *Phlb*. 25b–c; *Ti*. 27c; *Cri*. 106b).

Similarly, in metaphysics Plato's distinction between the Forms and sensible objects occupies the same conceptual niche as the distinction between gods and mortals. Thus, it is not surprising to find that the same terms used to describe the gods are also used to describe Forms (cf. *Resp*. 381c8–9 and *Symp*. 208a8, with *Phd*. 78c6, d2, d5, 79d5, e4, and *Resp*. 500c–d, 585c), or that the 'separation' of Forms from sensible mirrors the separation of gods from humans. Nevertheless, just as humans 'have a share' (*metechein*) of divine nature (*Prt*. 322a3), so also sensible things 'participate' (*metechein*) in the Forms (*Phd*. 100c5; *Prm*. 129a–c, 130b).

Plato's ethics are also expressed within a religious framework, one of introspective personal development leading towards divine perfection. From the *Apology* to the *Laws*, we find the idea that humans are stationed here as servants of the gods, with the object of living righteously by caring about the perfection of their souls (*Ap*. 28–30; *Phd*. 62–7; *Leg*. 644–5). Indeed, in the *Republic* the virtues are defined in terms of conditions of the soul: temperance is the good condition of the appetitive part, bravery the good condition of the spirited part, and wisdom the good condition of the rational part, while justice is the joint good condition of all three (*Resp*. 428–35, esp. 434d–435c). The process by which such conditions are produced is sometimes described as 'purification' (*Soph*. 227–9; *Phd*. 67–9), and the persons who attain purification are said to be loved by the gods (*Ap*. 41c; *Grg*. 508a; *Symp*. 212b; *Resp*. 352b; *Phlb*. 39e; cf. *Prt*. 345c). Those who live in such a way are rewarded after death, while those who do not, suffer punishment (*Ap*. 41c; *Cri*. 54d; *Grg*. 492–3, 523–7; *Meno* 81c;

Phd. 63b–c, 81–2, 113–14; *Cra*. 398b; *Phdr*. 248–9; *Resp*. 614–21; *Leg*. 870d–e, 881a, 904–5, 959–60).

Plato's psychology is the node where all these strands meet, but it is difficult, given his beliefs about the immortal soul, to say whether the focus is philosophical or religious. Arguments for the immortality of the soul are not uncommon (*Phd*. 70–2, 73–8, 78–84, 102–6; *Meno* 81–5; *Phdr*. 245–6; *Resp*. 608–11), while references to the soul as something distinct from and superior to the body are ubiquitous (*Cri*. 48; *Chrm*. 156–7; *Cra*. 403b; *Resp*. 498c, 585d; *Ti*. 34c, 41c–e, 42e, 69c, 90a; *Soph*. 246e; *Leg* 726a, 731c, 892a, 904d, 959a, 967b). By the fifth century BCE, belief in a part of us that survives death, and in an afterlife with rewards for the good and punishment for the evil, had become widespread in Athens, through the promulgation of Orphic, Bacchic, and Eleusinian rituals (West 1983; Burkert 1987; Edmonds 2004; and, in this volume, Edmonds, Chapter 37). Morgan proposes that Plato's view emerged from this background, but differed in replacing emotional ecstasy with the ecstasy of rational inquiry. He claims that Plato 'appropriated' the ecstatic model and adapted it to 'a conception of philosophy as a lifelong quest for salvation' (1992: 232).

Thus, Platonic philosophy is thoroughly welded to the frame of religion, from epistemology and metaphysics to ethics and psychology. By contrast, criticism of traditional myths occupies a small part of Plato's work. Far from standing in an antagonistic relation to religion, it is clear that Plato finds many religious beliefs and practices congenial to philosophy. Platonism does not just offer a 'philosophical religion' that can 'give non-philosophers a share in the perfection that philosophy affords' (Fraenkel 2013: x). His is a religious philosophy in which the attainment of philosophical perfection is a religious goal. While there are passages in Plato that suggest we are not meant to understand his mythical and religious talk literally (*Meno* 86b; *Phd*. 114d; *Grg*. 527; *Resp*. 621b; *Phdr*. 247c), it would be a mistake to think that the religious framework is dispensable. Platonic philosophy is what religion would be like if it were purified in the fire of reason.

Early Imperial Platonism and Pythagoreanism

Under the Roman Empire, philosophy and religion came directly into competition, appealing to the same needs and sometimes appropriating the same texts. Ultimately, Christianity became the principal representative of religion, while philosophers gave new meaning to pre-Christian belief systems.

Plutarch (*c*.45–125 CE), the biographer, was also a respected philosophical writer, much indebted to Plato. His mentor, late in Nero's reign (*EDelph* 385b), was Ammonios, an Egyptian (Eunap. *VS* 2.1.3), and his dialogues document an intellectual life that valued both Greek and Egyptian religious traditions. A Delphic priest, and one of several Platonists honoured by Delphic inscriptions, Plutarch regarded philosophy and religion as complementary; his philosophical works examined deep questions of religion, demonstrating commitment to key local religious institutions. Apollo became equally a philosopher and a prophet (*EDelph* 385b), not only solving life's difficulties for those consulting him, but also 'posing puzzles for those philosophically inclined, implanting in their minds a desire that leads them to the truth' (*EDelph* 384f). Plutarch understands the best myths and rituals as reflections of an elusive truth, which elevate the mind by inviting interpretation (cf. *De Is. et Os*. 358f–359a). While one cannot treat myth as a rational account, one may 'adopt whatever fits each thing according to resemblance' (*De Is. et Os*. 374e).

In the *De Iside et Osiride* Plutarch allows that Egyptian myths of divinities suffering violence must be rejected, while explaining much seemingly alien material in philosophically appropriate terms. He offered comparisons with what he interprets as an established Greek tradition, embracing theologians, lawgivers, poets, and philosophers, and reflected in Greek ritual and myth, with parallels in Zoroastrianism and Mithraism. Implicating the Pythagoreans Heraklitos, Empedokles, Anaxagoras, Euripides, and Aristotle (369b–70e), he promises to 'draw out the affinities of Egyptian religion with [Platonic] philosophy above all' (371a–383a).

Platonism worked naturally with multiple supernatural powers, while allowing explanation in terms of a single supreme creator. It placed emphasis on the welfare of one's inner self, the *psyche*, some or all of which allegedly survived death. It postulated Ideas serving as blueprints for creation and absolute moral standards. And it privileged a truth within ourselves over the manifest external world. At this time it influenced even

the sciences; the physician Galen admired the works of Plato, especially the *Timaeus*, and even commented on its neglected 'medical' chapters (Schröder 1934). Ordinarily, Galen avoided expressing opinions about supernatural entities, but a rare passage (*De usu partium* 4.360–2K) talks of an intelligence in the air, responsible for the intricate design of animal parts, as witnessed by Galen's dissections. Dissection becomes a more precise foundation for theology than any rites of Eleusis or Samothrace. 'For those rites are obscure indicators of their serious teachings, whereas the works of nature regarding all living things are obvious' (361.6–8K), displaying the 'wisdom and craft of the creator' (361.11–12). In an age craving insights into the divine, medical science announced its own role.

Scientific philosophy also flourished under two contemporaries of Galen, Claudius Ptolemaeus (philosophically unaligned) and Alexander of Aphrodisias (an Aristotelian). The former's *Tetrabiblos* offers astrology a more secure astronomical foundation instead of attacking it, while the latter's willingness to link active intellect (as functioning in humans) with the unmoved Aristotelian divinity ensured his high regard among the 'spiritualistic' Platonists who followed.

While science proved moderately accommodating, philosophical attacks on religious movements, particularly Christians and Gnostics, arose out of competition for the same spiritual ground. Attacks came from the Platonist Celsus whom Origen rebutted in his *Contra Celsum*, from Plotinus (*Ennead* 2.9), and from Porphyry's fragmentary *Contra Christianos*. Platonism argued that many beliefs of these new opponents were irreverent, while defending more ancient and respectable religions. This tendency peaked with the fifth-century BCE Platonists Syrianus and Proclus, for whom Homer, Hesiod, and particularly Orpheus rival the authority of Plato, Pythagoras, and the Chaldaean Oracles.

A similar rapprochement between philosophy and traditional religion had arisen in the time of Galen with the Pythagorean Numenius. Though we usually credit Plotinus, a century later, and his pupil Porphyry, with establishing 'Neoplatonism', which obliquely influenced both Christian and Arabic thought, Numenius' importance for Plotinus and Porphyry is clear (Porph. *Plot*. 14, 17–21). While Porphyry made Plotinus the real visionary, he perhaps downplayed Numenius' influence, suspicious of his influence on a new sub-philosophical revelatory literature, including Gnostic literature. Besides Pythagoras and Plato, the list of Numenian

authorities named in just sixty fragments (Des Places 1973) includes Homer (frr. 30–5); Orphics, Hesiod, and Pherecydes (fr. 36); Heraklitos, Genesis 1.2, and the Egyptians (fr. 30). Indeed, Numenius' work *On the Good* endeavoured to examine Plato and Pythagoras alongside respected rites, rituals, and doctrines of Brahmans, Jews, Magi, and Egyptians (fr. 1a). Hence, later religious syncretism would be indebted to Numenius' ability to synthetize religious and philosophical traditions.

Numenius is today suspected of being the inspiration behind the Chaldaean Oracles (Athanassiadi 2005), which influenced both pagan and Christian philosophy thereafter. Porphyry wrote on both these and other oracles (Athanassiadi 2005: 138 n. 10), so they became the subject of exegesis perhaps a century after they were written. Platonists already took this to be an ancient text, failing to connect their Platonizing tone with their Platonist origins. Granting them scriptural status, they reinforced the links between Platonism and theurgic practices.

Numenius' accommodating attitude to Homer, at the beginning of Greek literature and of corresponding importance, is obvious. Yet Plato's perceived attacks on Homer in the *Republic* meant that any defence had to explain away features criticized by Plato, including the mythical depiction of amoral or irrational gods. Though an allegorical interpretation of Homer had arisen in Classical times as a *rationalizing* device, it was given a *spiritual* function by Numenius and his friend Cronius, taking to a new level the reverence for Homer and mythology found in Plutarch. For Numenius (fr. 32, cf. fr. 35) Homer's *Odyssey* (24.12) had called Cancer and Capricorn 'Gates of the Sun', while the poem's wandering hero (fr. 33) symbolized 'the person who passes through successive generations, and . . . escapes to those beyond every wave and inexperienced of the sea' (cf. *Od*. 11.122–3). Numenius (fr. 31) and Cronius inspired Porphyry's brief, allegorizing treatise on the Cave of the Nymphs from *Odyssey* 13. The Cave was thought relevant to the cosmic wanderings of the soul, and Proclus holds that Numenius and Porphyry adopted similar cosmic interpretations of Plato's Atlantis story. Hermeias' commentary on *Phaedrus* 229c (30.10–31.2) shows how Neoplatonists explained why Plato rejected physicalist interpretations of myths: it was not because *all* allegory wastes effort better devoted to self-knowledge, but rather because myths actually unveil higher, non-physical things, thus *contributing* to

self-knowledge. This position agrees with the allegorical practices of Numenius and Porphyry.

The Porphyrian work, *On How Embryos are Animated* tells of people who held that life and soul arrive along with the sperm. They included 'Numenius and those who explain the hidden meanings (*hyponoias*) of Pythagoras, and interpret Plato's "River of Forgetfulness" (*Resp*. 621a), the "Styx" in Homer and Orphic [writings], and Pherecydes' "efflux" (DK 71 B 7) as references to sperm' (Numenius, fr. 36). Numenius finds cosmic symbolism in Parmenides (B1.11; fr. 31.27–8), and in Pythagoras, who allegedly referred to souls collecting at the Milky Way as 'People of Dreams' (*Odyssey* 24.12; frr. 32, 35). Besides comparative non-Greek material, Numenius sought a single ancient Hellenic wisdom, lost after Plato (frr. 24–8). He saw the Orphic idea of soul's earthly prison (Pl. *Phd*. 62b) as a symbol of pleasure (fr. 38). He may even owe his name, and the title of his work *Epops*, to Orphic considerations (Tarrant 2009: 16–17).

Numenius may be the first philosopher to employ such a variety of religious texts and authors, both non-Greek and pre-Platonic, as 'religious' allies of philosophy. But the underlying supposition that religious literature required philosophical *decoding* seems to have produced new philosophically *encoded* revelatory discourses. This is one way of understanding the Chaldaean Oracles and the Platonizing Gnostic texts of the Nag Hammadi corpus. Work on the Nag Hammadi texts has shown how four Coptic texts, *Allogenes*, *Zostrianos*, *Three Steles of Seth*, and *Marsanes*, display greater affinity with Platonism than with any one religious system. A principal concern is the ascent of the soul through the heavens, where, following Numenius (frr. 31, 32, 34, 35) and Plutarch (*de fac*. 943a ff.) the region of the disembodied soul is located. There are several parallels with the work of Plotinus and Porphyry (Turner 2001). Plotinus and his school actually attacked the work of Gnostics who promoted the revelations of Allogenes and Zostrianos (Porph. *Plot*. 16), and while it is likely that the Coptic texts are translations of the same Greek treatises known to Plotinus, some think otherwise (Majercik 2005). If they were, then material hitherto regarded as original to Plotinus, a rigorous if distinctly other-worldly philosopher, had already been propounded by Gnostic–Platonist writers.

CONCLUSION

We began by questioning the standard dichotomy between those who follow reason and those who follow religion, the former being 'philosophers' and the latter being poets, religious writers, and others whom Aristotle called 'lovers of myth' (*philomythoi*, *Metaph.* 982b17). The distinction does not suit the majority of Presocratics, including Xenophanes, and is misleading in the case of Plato. It is utterly false in the intellectual world of the second century CE. In general, outside Aristotelian and Epicurean traditions, philosophers seldom saw themselves as making any comprehensive attack on Greek religious heritage. Since that would amount to an attack on the culture they inherited, few viewed their projects in this way, even though comic writers and political opponents did so. Rather, they saw themselves as commending a modified understanding of that religious heritage, or as showing which elements of it were to be embraced and which rejected.

Believing that there is some truth behind a collection of beliefs or myths does not necessarily involve believing in its literal truth throughout, nor does culturally induced acceptance entail intellectual commitment. When we posit a clash between reason and religion in ancient Greece we often assume that non-philosophers were *committed* to the literal truth of what would, to us, be literally unbelievable. Yet intellectual commitment implies reasoned conclusions, and the evidence from Greek literature points to a widespread acknowledgement that many subjects involving the divine defied human knowledge. The barrier could, at best, be overcome by those with divine inspiration, be they poets, seers, or cult practitioners. Hence, an attack on anthropomorphism or on a Homeric depiction of warring gods constituted an attack on excessive literalism rather than on religion in general. Disbelief of the literal meaning would take some Presocratics in a physicalist direction, sophists in an agnostic direction, and Plato towards an inner, soul-based religion, towards providential governance of the universe, and, ultimately, towards astral theology. In time, Plato's dialogues became scriptural texts, likewise admitting various interpretations. Platonism eventually became the backbone of pagan religious philosophy under the Roman Empire.

In the light of these considerations we suggest that the philosophy–religion dichotomy has acquired some of its plausibility from scholars who first misunderstand the nature of religion, and, second, draw their concept of ancient philosophy too narrowly, magnifying the historical importance of the 'approved' philosopher Aristotle, and neglecting the philosophy of late antiquity. Similarly, such scholars assume that Platonic dialectic is the real Plato, while dismissing the religious trimmings, including inspired passages and original 'myths', as religious embellishment, ignoring the evidence of ancient interpreters (Tarrant 2005). In fact, the Platonic 'myths' are written in a different register (Tarrant et al. 2011), which ancient readers recognized as 'special' and important.

Evidence discovered in recent decades has highlighted the willingness of philosophy to appropriate and nurture religious ways of looking at the world. The Strasbourg Papyrus of Empedokles and the Derveni Papyrus make one acutely aware that some early writers did not recognize any such dichotomy, and that religious ideas and practices could sit comfortably alongside naturalistic cosmology. Similarly, the anonymous *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* and the Nag Hammadi Platonizing treatises show, first, how inseparable philosophy and religion had become, and, second, how the seemingly bare dialectic of Plato's *Parmenides* could be transformed into transcendent theology as relevant to human aspirations as Being, Life, and Mind (anon. *Prm.* 14.15–26; Turner 2010: 146–53).

Some new evidence has yet to be fully comprehended, and the Derveni Papyrus and Nag Hammadi scrolls will long continue to occupy scholars. There will also be new work that takes more seriously evidence for a spiritual dimension in early Pythagoreanism, deriving from a much greater facility for assessing late sources such as Porphyry and Iamblichus, who are only now receiving the required attention. We ourselves will be publishing further on the concept of the inspired voice, and on the language and importance of the philosophical myth throughout antiquity, while others will take the linguistic dimension of this work in new directions. We cannot predict the outcome of such research, however, for there will be new papyri and new inscriptions that further illustrate the fascinating ancient interplay between reason and religion.

Suggested Reading

On philosophical theology Gerson 1990, Drozdek 2007, and Fraenkel 2013 will give a wider picture, while Brisson 2004 remains an important book on ancient philosophical approaches to myth. For the Presocratics, see Curd and Graham 2008, and for Xenophanes in particular, see Lesher 1992 and Schäfer 1996. For the Derveni Papyrus, see Betegh 2004, while Edmonds 2004 brings in the important evidence of the Orphic Gold Tablets. For Plato and Greek religion, see Morgan 1990, 1992 and Mikalson 2010. For Plato's theology, see Solmsen 1942, Menn 1995, and Dombrowski 2007. For Hellenistic theology, see Mansfeld 1999; for Numenius there is now an English translation of the fragments (Petty 2012); an overview of issues concerning the Nag Hammadi texts is given by Turner 2010.

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PART IV

WHERE?

CHAPTER 16

TEMPLES AND SANCTUARIES

MICHAEL SCOTT

INTRODUCTION

THE many temples and sanctuaries of the Mediterranean Greek world have traditionally been seen not only as the most obvious (and impressive) physical incarnations of Greek religious practice and belief, but also as one of the clearest indicators of the continuity and unity of Greek religion and, more widely, of Greek society. In Herodotos (8.144), Athenian ambassadors to Sparta provide the famous definition of *to hellenikon* ('the Greek thing') as 'common blood, common language, common temples and religious customs . . .'. A resulting irony, however, is that although the Athenians argued that temples and sanctuaries and customs were connected, the way in which temples and sanctuaries have been studied in modern scholarship has been anything but continuous with the study of religious rituals and beliefs.

Temples and sanctuaries, and, to a great extent, the art they contained, have traditionally been the preserve of scholars of architecture, art, and archaeology, while the study of Greek religious ritual has principally been conducted through a study of the literary and epigraphic texts (cf. most

recently Wescoat and Ousterhout 2012: xxi–xxii). As a result, temples and sanctuaries (across Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods) have, in general, been studied either as part of architectural treatises; sanctuary excavation reports (e.g. *Fouilles de Delphes* series on Delphi, *Olympia*, *Olympia Bericht* and *Olympia Forschungen* on Olympia); and typological handbooks (cf. most recently Emerson 2007), rather than alongside the religious practices which they framed and with which they were intimately involved.

Such investigations, of course, continue to provide crucial insights not only into the physical development of these sites, but also into how to read and understand the constantly changing meanings of their art and architecture within these sacred spaces. Yet, over the last thirty years in particular, there have also been substantial efforts to reconnect this material with its surrounding contexts. Temples and sanctuaries are being pulled from their typological categories and inserted into wider histories (e.g. Whitley 2001), and contextualizing landscapes (e.g. Pedley 2005); while sacred spaces and structures are beginning to be integrated with the literary and epigraphic evidence for religious ritual and belief (e.g. Mylonopoulos and Roeder 2006). This process can be seen clearly in four (interconnected) areas of scholarly debate over sanctuaries and the structures and objects they contained over the Archaic to Hellenistic periods: i) what a sanctuary is; ii) why sanctuaries are where they are; iii) the roles sanctuaries played within the wider landscape; and iv) the experience of being within sacred space.

CURRENT DEBATES

What is a Sanctuary?

The earliest architectural surveys labelled sacred spaces with visible monumental architecture as spaces of ‘public’, ‘official’ religious practice, and those without as ‘private’, ‘unofficial’. This division contributed, in turn, to the unhelpful distinction in ritual practice between

‘religious’ and ‘magical’ acts, a distinction which, as the Introduction to this volume suggests, studies of Greek religion are still having to work to erase. Yet, in recent decades in particular, there has been a much wider recognition of the flexible, and indeed indeterminate, nature of sacred space and what is necessary for a sanctuary to be a sanctuary—that is to say, almost nothing (cf. Whitley 2001: 134).

In relation to temple architecture, there has been increasingly lively debate over what a temple represented in terms of both economic investment and social cohesion in the wider community (e.g. Davies 2001). At the same time, thanks in part to developments in theoretical approaches to architecture (e.g. Jones 2000), emphasis has also been put on the varying layout and resultant functionality of temple architecture (e.g. the implications of barriers within temples between viewer and cult statue: Mylonopoulos 2011).

Why Are Sanctuaries Where They Are?

Vincent Scully explained the layout of the sacred landscape in terms of the natural suitability of particular spaces for particular gods (Scully 1969). In the 1980s, however, his explanations were superseded by ones which connected sanctuaries to the developing political landscape (de Polignac 1995, original French version published 1984). De Polignac argued for the development of sacred spaces in conjunction with the articulation of polis communities and territories, with sacred spaces often acting as political boundary markers. His approach has been taken up, explored, and nuanced (by himself and others) in subsequent scholarship that has argued for a wider variety of factors affecting the placement of sanctuaries in the landscape (e.g. Schachter and Bingen 1992; Marinatos and Hägg 1993; Alcock and Osborne 1994; Burkert 1996; Cole 2004).

What Roles Did Sanctuaries Have?

In tandem with discussions about placement within the landscape, debate over the roles sanctuaries had in Greek society has moved on from the overtly political (in particular, ‘peer polity interaction’: Snodgrass 1986).

It has also developed beyond the attempt to apply neat categorizations for ‘types’ (and thus roles) of sanctuaries (e.g. inter-urban, extra-urban, urban, rural). Instead, more recent characterizations of sanctuaries tend to highlight not only the vast number of activities that took place within them (e.g. Sinn 2000), but also the way in which sanctuaries could simultaneously act as more than one ‘type’ of sanctuary: Delphi, for example, was the local sanctuary at the heart of the city of Delphi and, simultaneously, an inter-urban ‘Panhellenic’ sanctuary.

The Experience of Sanctuary Space

Scholarship has also tried to move away from positivist approaches to the experience of particular sacred spaces, which emphasized objective, scientific interpretation based on the archaeological data (and which were often encouraged by the a-chronological, Pausanias-era, ‘frozen in time’ descriptions of temples and sanctuaries in the typological handbooks). Such a move has sought to highlight not only the changing spatial development of particular sanctuaries over time (e.g. Scott 2010), but also to link fundamentally with the ritual activities and non-permanent elements of the sanctuary experience (e.g. ritual dance: Connelly 2011). In addition, it has drawn attention to the question of how visitors engaged within sacred space with structures, dedications, and inscriptions (e.g., most recently, Burrell 2009; Papalexandrou 2011).

In all four of the (interrelated) areas of debate reviewed, the tendency has been for scholarship to move away from a conception of the sanctuary and its contents as a static uniform place, as collections of structures performing single functions, with a fixed role within the wider landscape. Instead, it has moved towards the conception of a much more flexible, multidimensional, and polyvalent sacred space, with architectural spaces undertaking multiple simultaneous roles, and being perceived and experienced in many different ways by different users at different times.

The challenge now is to understand better how, in any particular chronological period and geographical place, this new conception of the multidimensionality of the physical spaces and places of Greek religion reflected, articulated, and contributed to Greek ritual practice, through a more integrated and interdisciplinary approach to all the evidence

available by scholars on both sides of the old material/ritual divide. Recent initiatives in the study of Greek religion (e.g. *Kernos* edited volumes and the *Thesaurus cultus et rituum antiquorum*), as well as in relation to a variety of ancient cultures (e.g. De Grummond and Edlund-Berry 2011), demonstrate the importance (and difficulty) of this challenge.

The following short case studies, which between them cover the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods, are intended not only to reiterate the multidimensionality of sacred spaces, but also the advantages that can come from an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to the evidence available. In particular, they are intended to show the way in which such an approach can contribute to our understanding of the way in which temples, sanctuaries, and their contents articulated the complex nature of Greek religious rituals and beliefs within the physical landscape at a particular place and time and, in turn, influenced their development.

CASE STUDY 1: THE SAMIAN HERAION

The surviving literary sources provide very little insight into the sanctuary of Hera on Samos. Pausanias, for example, gives us no in-depth account of its sacred space, Herodotos records it primarily as a marker of Samian prowess in the wider Greek world, and Athenaeus records a few chance references about its cult practices (cf. Kyrieleis 1993: 125). Inversely, thanks to its careful excavation and the excellent preservation conditions, its archaeological, architectural, and sculptural remains testify to its unique monumental sculpture, the awe-inspiring architecture of its sixth-century temples, copied and competed with around the Greek world, and the extraordinarily diverse and exotic range of small dedications (cf. Freyer-Schauenburg 1974; Kienast 1992: 193–8; Karakasi 2003: 29; Mazarakis Ainian 2009: 229–31; Osborne 2009: 93, 274–6). This discussion will focus on how the archaeological evidence opens up a unique window onto the changing place of the sanctuary in the landscape during the eighth to sixth centuries BCE, as well as onto the vitality, variety, and specificity of ritual within this sanctuary during that period.

The sanctuary is located some six kilometres away from the ancient town in a marshy river basin on the coast of the island, in a place often associated in myth with Hera's birth. It had a temple and altar from 800 BCE—one of the earliest examples of temple architecture in the Greek world (Osborne 2009: 89). Their construction marks the beginning of a period during which temples and sanctuaries, as part of wider changes in the perception of the sacred in ancient society, were coming to play a more visible role in the Greek landscape (cf. De Polignac 2009: 427–9). Yet, in the case of Samos, what is crucial is that the sanctuary was not linked to the polis in any official way before the late seventh/early sixth centuries BCE (indeed, a branch of the nearby river cut it off from the town settlement). Instead, in this early period, the archaeology reveals that the sanctuary's earliest orientation was towards the nearby coast: its users and worshippers came to it from the sea (Duplouy 2006), and what we know of its ritual ceremonies centred around contact with the sea (cf. Ath. 12.525f, and see, in this volume, Constantakopoulou, Chapter 19). It has been argued that the earliest orientation of the Hera sanctuary underlined the sanctuary's independence from the nearby town, pointing towards its own 'sacred centrality' as the reason for its early and rich development. This highlights the hugely important role sanctuaries could have in their own right as central focus points for a wider community, rather than, as often argued in polis-centric scholarship, simply acting as reflections of the development of civic centres to which they were linked (cf. Morgan 2003; de Polignac 2009: 435).

In the late seventh century BCE, however, the situation changed: the sanctuary was reoriented towards the city, following construction of a processional route linking the two (necessitating a diversion of the river that had hitherto divided them); a variety of new or replacement cult buildings were constructed within the sanctuary. Over the course of the sixth century, the temple to Hera was rebuilt twice on an increasingly elaborate scale. The first version, undertaken by the architect Rhoikos, *c*.570 BCE, was the first Ionic monumental temple in the Greek world. The second, part of the building programme initiated by the island's tyrant ruler, Polykrates, in the 530s, was described by Herodotos (3.39–60) as one of the greatest buildings in all of Greece. The number of cult buildings surrounding these temples proliferated as did the number of monumental free-standing sculptures, all of which were turned to face the processional

route towards the city (cf. Duplouy 2006: 190–203; Mazarakis Ainian 2009: 229).

The Heraion on Samos clearly received remarkable investment and attention during this period. Yet what the archaeology also underlines is the vital, varied, and specific nature of cult practice at this sanctuary. Three wells have been discovered between the sanctuary and the ancient shoreline, constructed at the time of the sanctuary's reorientation in the late seventh century and progressively filled with debris (much of which has survived because of the marshy conditions) until they were closed off in the late sixth century BCE (cf. Kyrieleis 1993: 135). In analysing the contents of the wells, several aspects of how Hera was worshipped at this sanctuary came to light: there was an unusually low number of goat bones left over from sacrifices and sacrificial meals in comparison to most Greek sanctuaries; the number of wild fallow deer that had been sacrificed was striking, in contrast to the widespread belief that wild animals were not used in Greek sacrificial ritual; there was a marked absence of thigh bones, indicating that the thigh bones (normally a particular delicacy to eat) were most likely, as part of the ritual in this particular sanctuary, burnt as an offering to the gods (Kyrieleis 1993: 137–8).

At the same time, the nature of the small votive offerings in the sanctuary indicates not only how particular aspects of the goddess were emphasized by different social groups on Samos, but also how her worship on Samos was both different from, and linked to, forms of worship she received elsewhere in the Greek world. For a goddess whose ritual worship included engagement with the sea, it is perhaps not surprising that a collection of wooden boat carvings have been found. These, rather than being representations of worshippers' modes of transport, seem to have had a ritual and symbolic value in the worship of Hera that was unknown elsewhere in the Greek world (Kyrieleis 1988: 217). At the same time, in no other Greek sanctuary has such a large collection of horse trappings (bronze bridles and harnesses) been found. This suggests a particular emphasis on the worship of Hera here as a protector of horses and riders, potentially by those most likely to have owned horses, the higher (and land-based) social ranks of Samian society (Kyrieleis 1993: 145). At the same time, dedications of small wooden stools (too small to be of practical use) with carved sides have survived. Their best parallel is in Near Eastern art (Kyrieleis 1993: 141–5), which suggests an Eastern

aspect to the cult of Hera on Samos, perhaps not surprising given the island's position just off the coast of Asia Minor. This Eastern influence is also indicated by the dedication of both real and terracotta and ivory representations of pomegranates, pine cones, and poppy pods and their seeds. The abundance of these ritual dedications, thought to be associated with fertility aspects of the goddess, is best mirrored in the ritual practices of the ancient Near East in the seventh century BCE, and particularly in Assyria (Bürchner 1892: 29, 92; Kyrieleis 1988: 219–20). Even more indicative of this link with the East is the way in which some foreign visitors to the sanctuary seem to have equated Hera to deities in their own pantheon, as a bronze statuette of man and dog from Babylonia, normally reserved for the local mother goddess Gula, seems to show (Kyrieleis 1993: 146, and, on links with the East, see, in this volume, Bremmer, Chapter 40).

At the same time, it seems that Samians took their practices for the worship of Hera with them as they travelled and settled around the Mediterranean world. Special dining pottery with the name Hera painted on the side was found discarded in the wells on Samos, a practice best paralleled in the sanctuary of Hera at Naukratis in Egypt, also originally set up by Samian traders (Kyrieleis 1993: 139–40; Mazarakis Ainian 2009: 231). Alongside this particularity of ritual worship of Hera on Samos and by Samians around the Mediterranean, there are similarities with the ritual practices at other Hera sanctuaries. For example, the discovery of small dedicated house models in terracotta at the sanctuary on Samos have parallels exclusively at the other major Greek sanctuaries of Hera at Argos and Perachora on the Greek mainland (Kyrieleis 1988: 217), linking the cult at the Samian Heraion to other communities of Hera worshippers around Greece.

The picture provided by the archaeology of ritual at the Samian Heraion underlines the complexity and variety of cult practice within a single sanctuary, and, by extension, across the Greek world. Ritual practice may have been a strong cohesive agent between Greeks, but it was not uniform: it could link together sanctuaries and places within the Greek world; it could link Greek sacred space to practices of very different cultures; it could also underline the uniqueness of cult practice in one particular place and the variety of ways in which different members of the same community could engage in worship of the same goddess. This picture of

the complexity of ritual practice offers an important insight into the role and nature of a sanctuary even after it had been officially attached to a polis. Although the monumental dedications were all made by the rich Samians of the local polis, the widespread origins of the sanctuary's smaller dedications suggest a far wider network, and this is also indicated by the ritual at the Samian Heraion, which continued to link the sanctuary to a much wider Greek and non-Greek world.

CASE STUDY 2: THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS ARISTOBOULE, ATHENS

Athens was, according to Pausanias, a city more devoted to the gods than most (1.24.3). Its complex system of myths, rituals, and festivals have often been studied with a view to stressing the integral place of religion in Athens, the special intensity of Athens' relationship with the divine, and the complex ways in which Athenian religious practices oscillated between tradition and change. More rarely investigated is the question of how the physical space of the sacred fits into this picture, and in particular, how the less well-known Athenian sacred spaces complement our understanding of Athens' more famous temples and sanctuaries (cf. Parker 2005: 52–60).

The Temple of Artemis Aristoboule ('of best council') was constructed in 480–72 BCE to the west of Kolonos Agoraios in the deme of Melite (near the modern Thissio metro station) (cf. Travlos 1971: 121–3; Wycherley 1978: 189–90; Garland 1992: 76–8; Camp 2001: 61). Plutarch, in his account of the life of Themistokles, states that the Temple, along with several other religious structures (e.g. the *telesterion* at Phyle, the Temple of Aphrodite at Eetioneia), were built by Themistokles himself, in honour of his own advice and council during the Persian Wars (Plut. *Them.* 1.3–4, 22.1–2; *Mor*. 869C–D). Plutarch adds that the temple was built near Themistokles' house, and that Themistokles set a portrait statue (*eikonion)* of himself in the temple, which survived into Plutarch's time, and which

suggested ‘that he had not only a heroic spirit, but also heroic presence as well’ (Plut. *Them.* 22.2).

The physical remains of the temple, excavated 1958–64, show that it was a modest structure: 3.6 m^2, with a porch 1.85 m in depth, but that it was located in a highly visible site at the junction of two roads (Travlos 1971: 121), one coming from the *agora* to the Peiraic gate, and the other leading to the Demian gate (through which those condemned to death were led on the way to the Barathron). The presence of numerous examples of *krateriskoi* (miniature mixing bowls exclusive to the cult of Artemis) dating from the early fifth century BCE not only reinforce the speed at which the shrine was constructed following Themistokles’ role in defeating the Persian invasion, but also suggests a strong continuity of cult practice with that of other Artemis sanctuaries like Artemis Mounychia (Garland 1992: 76). There was also a connection between the Artemis Aristoboule and Artemis Mounychia regarding the reason for their worship: the festivals of Artemis Mounychia were said to commemorate the bright moonshine before the battle of Salamis (see Parker 2005: 400).

Despite the fact that traditional accounts of temple building characterize them as the preserve of civic bodies within the polis system, Parker has emphasized how the founding of a temple to a new god (or at least a god with a new epithet) by an individual was not an unusual occurrence in ancient Athens (Parker 1996: 3, 215–6, 238). Telemachus, for example, built a place of worship for Asklepios on the Acropolis, and Konon, in 394 BCE, built a temple to Aphrodite Euploia in honour of his victory. Indeed, given that, with the exception of the Tyrannicides statue in the *agora*, Athens did not award honorific statues to individuals during the fifth century BCE (the first known honorary statue was awarded to the same Konon who built himself a temple in 394 BCE), the building of a temple by an individual within the polis of Athens seems to have been one of the more acceptable ways of celebrating an individual’s contribution to the city (although Plutarch relates that, in Themistokles’ case, he was also chastised for his excessive dedications: Plut. *Them.* 22.1).

Themistokles’ modest temple, dedicated to Artemis ‘of best council’, and thus, by extension, a testament to Themistokles’ own excellent advice to the people of Athens, formed part of a wider religious landscape. This provided the context for how the people of Athens interpreted not only different parts of their city, but also their more prestigious temples and

sanctuaries. Many scholars have argued that, during the fifth century, the central city, the *astu*, of Athens was more open to the worship of new gods and gods with new epithets than ever before (Parker 1996: 196). In contrast, it has been argued that, in Athens' port, the Piraeus, the entry and worship of new gods was monitored very closely by the demos (Garland 1987: 107, on new gods, see, in this volume, Anderson, Chapter 21). As such, Themistokles' temple, I would argue, would have played a role in making visually apparent the distinction between the *astu* and Piraeus of Athens. At the same time, this monument would also have been a reminder to Athenians of the central, and perhaps unnervingly important, role played by individuals in Athenian society (cf. Wycherley 1978: 200).

Yet this temple's place in the Athenian landscape did not remain constant. Following Themistokles' fall from grace, the archaeological evidence indicates that the shrine also fell on hard times (although insets carved into the anta block of the temple for votive stelai indicate that the shrine was never completely abandoned: Travlos 1971: 121.) The epigraphical evidence then reveals how, over the course of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, as Themistokles' reputation revived, the sanctuary was refurbished and adopted as the central deme shrine for the deme of Melite. By 330 BCE, the demesmen of Melite set up a decree (*SEG* 22.116.5) praising Neoptolemos, son of Antike, for his services to Artemis, most probably in connection with the refurbishment of the temple, including the installation of a threshold in Hymettian marble (Travlos 1971: 121). The temple henceforth seems to have been administered by the deme (perhaps serving as Themistokles' hero shrine: Wycherley 1978: 192).

Nor was Themistokles' temple the only sacred space dedicated by an individual to be taken over by the wider community in the same period: for example, Telemachus' Asklepios sanctuary on the Acropolis was taken over by the Kerykes, a *genos* of Athens (Parker 1996: 215–6); while the altar to Pythian Apollo by the Illisos river, set up by Peisistratos to celebrate his own archonship (*IG* I^3 948), was taken over by the *boule* and *demos* (*IG* I^3 84). Pressures on the city, like the Peloponnesian War, seem to have caused the polis to become much more concerned with controlling sacred spaces over the course of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (for example, *IG* I^3 78, 422 BCE, records how the *archon basileus* ('royal archon') was given power to fix the boundary of the *hiera* ('sacred area')

in the Pelargikon (area around the base of the Acropolis), while the *boule* and *demos* take control of what happens within those spaces).

It is questionable whether Themistokles would have been allowed to build his temple at such a time. As it was, although its associations with him as an individual rose and fell depending on how the city regarded him, the temple and sanctuary seem slowly to have been absorbed into the concerns and purview of the local civic administration (ironically enough, during a time in which honouring individuals with statues, an option which had been out of bounds in the fifth century, was becoming more and more commonplace).

The shrine of Artemis Aristoboule thus seems to have performed a number of roles within the deme of Melite and within the wider religious landscape of Athens. It was the highly visible marker of the role and importance of an individual to the city. But it was also, through its associations with other Artemis cult spaces and rituals, part of a wider network of worship for an important god within the Athenian pantheon, and, as such, worked to integrate Athens as a community and maintain its stability. Its links with an individual may have contextualized Athenians' understandings of their more famous civic constructions, around which the city of Athens and Attica were focused. But such links also helped to clarify differences in styles of management of ritual practice between the *astu* of the city and the Piraeus. Increasingly, over time, it acted as a religious focus for the deme of Melite. But it was also Melite's trump card, stressing that deme's ascendancy over, and difference from, others. It demonstrated the importance of one of their own demesmen—a claim they may have needed if we are to believe Plutarch (*Them.* 22.2) that the deme was also the dumping ground for the bodies of those who had been sentenced to death by the city (cf. Garland 1992: 77; Parker 2005: 54 n.13).

CASE STUDY 3: WORSHIPPING FOREIGN DEITIES ON DELOS

In the Hellenistic period, within the vibrant religious community on Delos (see, in this volume, Constantakopoulou, Chapter 19), one of the most distinctive features was the number and variety of 'foreign' deities worshipped (cf. Baslez 1982). Following excavation during the nineteenth century, their initial discovery provoked disbelief: no literary sources had survived attesting to the presence of Egyptian divinities on the island and so excavators at the time were unwilling to attribute the extensive remains of (what we now know were three different) sanctuaries to Egyptian deities (on Greco-Egyptian cult in general, and the introduction of the cult of Sarapis, see, in this volume, Kleibl, Chapter 41, and Anderson, Chapter 21).

Unlike most foreign cults that seem to have been introduced to the island by worshippers during their time and activity on Delos as traders (cf. Baslez 1977: 312), the introduction of the worship of the Egyptian god Sarapis was undertaken by the priest of the cult himself in the third to early second century BCE. The inscription relating the story of the establishment of the first Egyptian sanctuary of Sarapis (Sarapeion 'A'; *IG* XI, 4 1299), which was subsequently set up in the sanctuary, reveals how, for over two generations of the priestly family in charge of the cult, its worship had been mobile on the island, without any permanent built sanctuary (Roussel 1915–1916: 29, 248–9). Moreover, even when the application was made for a permanent sanctuary (according to the inscription at the behest of the god himself to his priest), there seems to have been some reserve amongst the Delian authorities: permission for a private cult was temporarily withheld before being eventually granted (Bruneau 1970: 658).

This first sanctuary of Sarapis was not constructed near the central Apollo and Artemis sanctuary on the shore (where the vast majority of buildings and dedications by Hellenistic rulers were concentrated), but in a cleft of the hills leading up to Mount Kynthos. Such a position has been, in part, explained by the needs of this Egyptian cult (a flowing stream—the Inopus—was able to 'resemble' the Nile and provide water for cult activity). But such a position also chimes with the hesitancy registered in the sanctuary's founding inscription: nestled into the cleft of the hillside as it was, Sarapis' first sanctuary on Delos was almost invisible from the Apollo and Artemis sanctuary and from the shoreline. Its succeeding counterpart, Sarapeion 'B'—also a private cult establishment—was given

a similarly invisible position within the same hillside cleft. At the same time, however, the architecture of these sanctuaries for the Egyptian god, while clearly catering for a different set of rituals than those for Hellenic deities, does not conform to any strict cannon of Egyptian worship. Their architecture is a mix of Greek style and responses to the needs of the Egyptian cult, coupled with a response to the pressures of space and the hill's incline within this cramped part of the island (for example, the entrance to Sarapeion 'B' is a long staircase squeezed in between two shops).

In contrast, however, the initial construction of Sarapeion 'C', the third Egyptian sanctuary on Delos, sometime in the first half of the second century BCE, reveals the continually changing relationship between the priests and worshippers of Sarapis and the island authorities. Sarapeion 'C' was made a public, official, rather than private, cult, and, in turn, it was placed next to (and indeed enveloped) the Temple of Hera. This was on a visible platform above the cleft where Sarapeion 'A' and 'B' had been located, marking 'C' out as a more public entity in the island's sacred landscape—and therefore, presumably, more acceptable. Its finished form is the result of several enlargements during the second and first centuries BCE and its architecture can seem much more 'Egyptian' than its predecessors: its *dromos* ('entrance passage') with sphinxes has basic similarities in layout and attributes with other Egyptian temples, particularly the Sarapeion in Memphis (Roussel 1915–1916: 68–9; Bruneau and Ducat 2005: 279; Bruneau 2006). Yet, at a more detailed level, neither its architecture nor surviving sculpture is in any way Egyptian in style. Moreover, at least one of its temples, that of Isis, was, according to its accompanying inscription, actually dedicated by the Athenians after their reassumption of control of the island in 166 BCE (*ID* 2041), along with the cult statue of Isis placed inside it (*ID* 2044), which represents the Egyptian deity in Hellenized form, resembling closely that of the Greek figure Tyche (Marcadé 1969: no. 30).

A picture is thus emerging of the fluidity and complexity surrounding the place and perception of foreign, particularly Egyptian, deities on Delos in the third to first centuries BCE. The layout and feel of these cult spaces, as may be expected, bore witness to the combined pressures of necessity, cult activity, and Hellenic influence. And yet that balance was continually in flux: later, cult spaces became more visible and official, looked more

and more Egyptian, and yet were often constructed by Hellenic communities keen to invest in the worship of these foreign deities in an increasingly cosmopolitan world. At the same time, however, this fluidity obscures a much stricter set of parameters pertaining to how these sanctuaries were perceived by the different communities who used them. Right next to the Sarapeion 'C', a sanctuary to the Syrian divinities Atargatis and Hadad (both of whom had been assimilated to Hellenic divinities elsewhere on the island and within the Syrian sanctuary itself, e.g. Zeus Hadad and Hagne Aphrodite), was constructed sometime after the middle of the second century BCE. It became a prosperous and popular cult location on the island (Will and Schmidt 1985). This sanctuary, while once again responding architecturally to the needs of the particular cult (Roussel 1916: 260), was also physically joined to the Sarapeion 'C' through a shared wall (although there was no access between the two: Roussel 1915–1916: 13). These sanctuaries thus seem to have been perceived, in the minds of those responsible for allocating space for these sanctuaries, as linked.

Moreover, Greek worshippers on the island seem to have considered them equally worth engaging with: Greek dedications are found in both sanctuaries, offered to traditionally Greek gods like Apollo, as well as to Hellenized versions of the foreign deities, and to the foreign deities themselves (Laidlaw 1933: 225; Bruneau 1970: 466–73). During the period of Athenian rule after 166 BCE, Athenian involvement in both 'official' cults is clear: three of the attested officials in the sanctuary of the Syrian gods, for example, had to be Athenians, and, as previously mentioned, the construction in Sarapeion 'C' was Athenian led. At the same time, however, while dedications to Egyptian deities were being made within cult spaces across the island, the worship of Syrian deities (rather than their Hellenic 'counterparts') outside the sanctuary of Syrian gods was very rare (Bruneau 1970: 473). Despite the physical proximity of their sanctuaries and the willingness of Greeks to dedicate in both, there are no attested cases of Syrian divinities being associated with Egyptian divinities in any single dedication (Roussel 1916: 255).

This architectural, archaeological, and epigraphical evidence reveals the complex, multiple, and conflicting ways in which the different communities and authorities on Delos perceived and worshipped these particular divinities, and how this changed over time. The Egyptian

sanctuaries on Delos were initially located out of sight, before gradually becoming an official cult with a visible cult location. At the same time, their architecture and art underlined a complex interplay between Egyptian ritual and Greek styles of architecture and art. Meanwhile, despite the evidence that those allocating sanctuary space on Delos perceived there to be similarities in religion for Egyptian and Syrian divinities, and despite equal engagement with these divinities by Greek worshippers, there was no linking of these divinities in individual dedications.

CONCLUSION

These brief case studies of three different sanctuaries have ranged in time and across place. They have focused on the evidence of small cult offerings and practices to grand art and architecture. In some examples, the material evidence has opened up a world almost unknown through the literary sources, while others have revealed a complex interplay between the surviving literary, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence. In each case, using an interdisciplinary approach, we can see how the physical spaces and structures of Greek religion performed multiple simultaneous and changing roles in the wider landscape, and were engaged with and perceived by their different users in multiple, sometimes conflicting, ways. Sanctuaries were flexible, multidimensional, and polyvalent institutions which, thanks in turn to the structures and objects they contained, reflected, articulated, and facilitated the extraordinary number of ways in which religious practice was interwoven and embedded into Greek society, many of which we are still only beginning to understand (cf. Elsner 2012: 18). Herodotos was right to claim temples and sanctuaries as a key part of *to hellenikon*, not because they were all the same, nor because they were understood in the same way, nor because they demonstrated that Greek ritual was all the same, but because they were all equally good at showing the unique and complex nature of Greek religious life.

Suggested Reading

In addition to the titles mentioned in the main text: Chaniotis 2011 is particularly useful for thinking about how religious practice influenced and reflected interaction amongst different Mediterranean communities. Hägg 1998 is an important volume which tackles insightfully the difficult relationship between ritual and material object. Haysom and Wallensten 2011 offers a range of recent approaches to accessing religious practice through not only the full range of evidence, but also the full range of senses. Prêtre 2009 looks at the variety of ways in which ritual belief, practice, and material culture can be tied together. Spawforth 2006 is an up-to-date and thoughtful analysis of the variations inherent in both the construction and purpose of temples across the wider Greek world. Finally, Wescoat, and Ousterhout 2012 offer a series of innovative approaches to the analysis of sacred space.

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CHAPTER 17

HOUSEHOLDS, FAMILIES, AND WOMEN

MATTHEW DILLON

INTRODUCTION

IN the Classical period, an *oikos*, the family unit, including its members, slaves, and property, came together in a very real sense when its own immediate concerns took it outside the home to sanctuaries of the gods. Iconography in the fourth century BCE captures the Athenian family at worship, before not just one god but several: Asklepios, Artemis, and Athena. In the Archaeological Museum at Athens there is a large collection of marble votive reliefs, each of which portrays a scene of an individual family worshipping before Asklepios and his daughter Hygeia. Along the length of any one of these reliefs there straggles a line of figures, Asklepios, Hygeia, and a family: an adult couple (presumably man and wife), followed by children. There is also a maid slave at the end of the line with a basket balanced on her head, which basket carries the implements for a sacrifice about to be performed. Most of the reliefs show a small slave male figure standing immediately before a small altar with

an animal: the sacrificial victim, in whose meat the whole family and the slaves will share. Sickness and the desire for health would have led the Athenian family to either the Asklepieion at the foot of the acropolis or the one at the Piraeus. To commemorate the visit and remind the god of the family's piety, the head of the household commissioned a relief immortalizing the event (see Athens National Archaeological Museum 1333; *LIMC* s.v. Asclepius no. 66; Hausmann 1948: 177, fig. 6; see also *LIMC* s.v. Asclepius nos 63–70, 248).

Family outings were also common to Artemis' sanctuary at Brauron, and while there are fewer reliefs representing these, they are very similar in nature to the Asklepiad family scenes: Artemis is before an altar, there is a family group, an animal to sacrifice, and a slave girl with a basket (*LIMC* s.v. Artemis no. 461, *c.*450 BCE, 673 (Kaltsas and Shapiro 2008: 80, fig. 2), 674, 974, 1127, 1151). There was clearly a well-established iconography of family visits to sanctuaries. Much earlier, a well-known single representation (dating to 490–80 BCE), a shallow relief from the Athenian Acropolis, depicts a family before a divine female figure: presumably Athena given its find spot, Athens (National Museum Acropolis 581; see *LIMC* s.v. Athena no. 587; Dillon 2002: 32–3, fig. 1.4; Neils 2003: 144, fig. 5; Kaltsas and Shapiro 2008: 81, 226–31). A man, a woman, and two children venerate the goddess; a large sow is present, to be sacrificed. These 'family outings' involving a sacrifice in which all the family will share brought the family as a socio-religious unit to a god whose assistance it needed. But it is the husbands who come first in the ragged processional lines of the reliefs.

Families in the Classical period practised their religion outside their home by visiting a variety of sanctuaries and worshipping the gods most beneficial for their concerns. It is for the Classical era that there is, as often, the firmest evidence, and consequently the focus of this discussion will be on this period. In these family-specific activities, men had a more prominent role than women. Similarly—and perhaps surprisingly—men dominated the rites that took place within the household itself, in which women were generally spectators rather than participants. Yet women celebrated their own religious activities without the assistance of men. These could occur in shrines within the house, yet most women-only religious activity took place outside of the home in the company of other women—or, in fact, on the rooftops of their houses. By examining these

differently spatially orientated activities of the family and its women—outside the house, within it, and even on it—the religiosity of women and the family's religious practices are indicated, as is the extent to which women's religion was largely divorced from the immediate concerns of the *oikos*.

WOMEN AND SACRIFICE

Sacrifices were the very essence of Greek religion, and women were present at many of these and ate of the butchered meat. Reliefs prove that women were present at family sacrifices made to Asklepios, Artemis, and Athena, and obviously consumed the meat from these. While Detienne (1989: esp. 131) argued that women were not present at sacrifices, this position is not tenable because the literary and iconographic evidence is overwhelming. Terracotta figurines show women holding piglets, presumably for the Thesmophoria festival, at which women and sacrifice are linked by literary sources (Isae. 8.19–20; Ar. *Thesm.* 750–61; Schol. Ar. *Ran.* 388; Paus. 4.17.1). Priestesses were given shares of the sacrificial meat, while specifically banning women from sacrifices was a special punishment for adultery at Athens (Aeschin. 1.183).

Women let out a ritual cry—first attested in Homer (Hom. *Od.* 3.450)—at sacrifices. Literature and iconography constitute unarguable, incontrovertible evidence: women were present at sacrifices, ate sacrificial meat, and could even perform their own sacrifices (Ar. *Lys.* 177–9; Paus. 2.35.4–8, 4.17.1; for Athens Archaeological Museum 16464, see discussion below). Detienne's views illustrate how the imposition of fixed preconceptions without reference to evidence distorts the history of women's activities in Greek religion. (Osborne 1993 correctly critiques Detienne's view, dealing with epigraphic evidence to the contrary; Dillon 2002: 236–46 corrects it with a focus on the literary evidence.)

Ubiquitous on Athenian pottery are (literally hundreds of) scenes of women pouring libations onto altars, in preparation for the sacrifice, and they are also shown in scenes of divination: they stand with a libation bowl while their soldier-husband examines the entrails of a beast that has

just been sacrificed (such as on *ARV* 181.1). Women in these scenes represent the married couple at worship, and the intrinsic necessity of the woman to assist her husband in these rites. Women, however, could also organize their own sacrifices. Iconographic scenes show women in sacrificial contexts, without adult males present. A large marble relief from Echinos shows three women before an altar in a temple, as is indicated by the two columns flanking the scene (Archaeological Museum of Lamia 1041; see Dillon 2002: 232, fig. 7.4, 355 n.105; Neils 2003: 145, fig. 6; Kaltsas and Shapiro 2008: 86, fig. 8). A larger-than-life goddess stands behind the altar, with a large torch in her right hand. She is doubling as a representation of a cult statue in the temple, and as a divine epiphany to her women worshippers. A baby is being presented to her by a slave woman (as indicated by her dress), and clothes dedicated to the goddess are shown hanging along the wall: hence the deity must be Artemis. No adult males are present. At the far left of the scene, a well-dressed woman, who is presumably the mother of the baby, holds an offering to the goddess in her hand, while another woman slave carries a tray of offerings on her head. A diminutive slave boy controls a beast for sacrifice right before the altar; it will be slaughtered as a thanksgiving offering for the birth of the child. Not only is the woman making the sacrifice without any of her menfolk in attendance, but the marble relief, at about 120mm long, will have been a very expensive offering, which presumably her husband had a role in setting up in the temple (and, incidentally, Artemis leans against a plinth on which it is to be imagined the relief will be set up).

On a similar theme, a wooden polychromatic plaque from a cave of the nymphs in Pitsa depicts a heavily pregnant woman, accompanied by three other women. A slave boy holds a sheep before a low altar onto which one of the women, who has a tray on her head, pours a libation. Two other boys are present, one with an *aulos* and the other a harp: music will accompany the sacrifice; no other males are present (Athens Archaeological Museum 16464; see Dillon 2002: 229, fig. 7.3, 355 n. 122; Kaltsas and Shapiro 2008: 225, no. 101). These two representations show one woman with a newborn child thanking Artemis for a safe delivery, and another woman, pregnant, sacrificing for a safe delivery. Sacrifices will occur and the women will eat of the meat in a ritual context without the presence of men. Women and childbirth were fitting contexts for sacrifice, and the

child in the Lamia scene attends its first sacrifice. These two women, one from Pitsa and one from Echinos, are depicted on wood and stone respectively, commemorating their sacrifice and so having it immortalized.

Athenian families as societal units pursued a number of religious rites, and those rites that families celebrated together were organized and dominated by the men of the household. Women in any particular family in ancient Athens, and Greece generally, took part in numerous religious festivals of the city-state, which they attended and participated in alongside (or to one side of) their fathers and husbands. Various religious activities had, at their centre, the family as an entity, for example, visits to temples and shrines in which they prayed and sacrificed together.

WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

Within the household, women did not take the lead in pious activity, as might be expected, but were, rather, secondary players in the religious life of the home/*oikos*. Yet, in addition to the festivals and rites, which were organized and legitimated by the male inhabitants of the polis and in which women participated, women also had considerable religious independence, and some of their sacred activities strike at the core of the concept of 'polis religion', precisely because they operated outside of the religious institutions and practices that had evolved within a city.

From a methodological perspective, while there is a variety of evidence from cities in the Greek world other than Athens, it is only from that city that there is anything resembling coherent literary and iconographic 'narratives' of the family's experiences of religion. Based on this, and focusing on the relationship between a woman's religion and her house and family, it can be established that women were surprisingly independent of their family in some religious matters; they often worshipped in the company of other women without their family and without male supervision or involvement. Involved in rites sanctioned by and part of the official religious fabric of the polis, but also organizing

their own rites and acts of worship, women pursued their own independent personal and religious needs separately from their families.

Women, the family, and the house were inextricably interwoven in Greek society, and it might be expected that women pursued some degree of religious activity within their home in conjunction with their family. Any supposition that they might have performed a number of religious activities within the house either independently or as the female 'head' of the house could also be based on an assumption that women were 'secluded' within the household (for women's religiosity and the issue of seclusion, see Goff 2004: 2–3). However, some points intrude to negate these presuppositions. Detailed studies and analysis point not merely to a large number of religious rites for women in ancient Athens, and other Greek cities, but also focus on the wide degree of women's participation in these, especially at the citizen level (Dillon 2002; Goff 2004). In particular, attention is drawn here to Goff's important treatment of women in Greek religion, in which she not only establishes the nature of Greek women's ritual activities, but seeks to understand what meaning these activities had for them (Goff 2004; for women in Greek religion, see also: Kron 1996; Blundell and Williamson 1998; Dillon 2002, 2003, 2006b; Connelly 2007; and Kaltsas and Shapiro 2008). That women did not turn inward within the house to find expression for their religious requirements is indicated not only by this wide degree of religious activity in the private and public cults celebrated in the polis, but also by the indisputable fact that most of women's religious concerns were not satisfied within the house, while—almost perversely—men dominated organized various household rites, especially concerning the recognition of their children as legitimate.

Archaeology for this topic is ungendered, and reveals that some houses had permanent hearths and a very few had altars, but this does not indicate anything beyond the existence of religious activity there, given what is known about religious rites at these two points. Many hearths, of course, within cramped houses of urban centres in particular would have been portable metal devices (Ar. *Ach*. 888; Robinson and Graham 1938: 322–3; Jameson 1990: 192–3; Nevett 1999: 66, 124, 195 n. 4). Evidence for women and household religion is very limited, and Plato's criticism of women's penchant for founding altars and shrines in houses is the mainstay of what is known (Pl. *Leg*. 909e–910b).

Such limited source material partly explains why this topic is neglected by scholars, such as Pomeroy (see Pomeroy 1975, who might have been expected to discuss it on pp. 75–8). It apparently did not occur to Festugière (1954) that Greeks experienced a more intimate, 'personal' religion in the rites of the house, precisely because little apart from Plato suggests they did. Sourvinou-Inwood, in fact, argued that there was no 'private religion' of the house, even when rites were performed in it, because these rites were subsumed within polis religion (Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a: 28–9). Until the last decade, little effort has been made to examine the cultic reality of women's rites and their experiences, and yet it is through women's participation in and experience of religious activities that their lives and voices can be partly 'recovered' for the historical record.

For women's religious role within the house, the most detailed authority is Plato, who, in setting out the practices of worship in his ideal city, contrasts them with current Greek, but presumably especially Athenian, custom (Pl. *Leg*. 909e–910b):

> It is the practice of all women in particular, and ill individuals in all places, and also those who are in danger or at a loss . . . to dedicate whatever is available, and to vow that they will make sacrifices and establish shrines to gods, *daimones*, and the children of gods. Because of fears aroused by omens and dreams, and as they recollect many visions and try to provide an extirpation for each of them, they establish altars and shrines throughout houses and villages and the open countryside, indeed everywhere which was the place of these experiences.

Plato would ban all such private religious demonstrations, and have cult in its entirety centred in public spaces, and none in houses. While criticizing women's capacity for founding shrines, Plato indicates to modern readers the reality of their doing so, and draws attention to their spontaneous religious activity. Especially, he complains, it is women who fill houses, villages, and the countryside with shrines (suggesting a vision of small religious places dotted across the landscape). While he complains that it is the sick, those in danger, or 'at a loss' who are responsible for the founding of these shrines, it is women in particular who do so, pointing to their particular religious sensitivities and sensibilities. He mentions house interiors as one of three locations where women establish shrines. These household shrines will have offered women an accessible place wherein they could worship, presumably tending to these shrines in the course of their daily experiences inside. This interiorization of their religious

experience would have been (not to seem too utilitarian) extremely convenient in times when there were no festivals or cult activities taking place.

But if these women's houses were filled with altars and shrines, then these have left no archaeological, iconographical, or literary trace. They will presumably have been modest affairs, to be imagined as throughout the house, particularly in the *gynaikonitis* (women's quarters, for those families which could afford these). Greek houses had no separate and special altar or shrine (Jameson 1990). Yet the house and its locale were an important place for the commemoration of individual religious experiences—whether iatric (healing) or epiphanic. Yet as a locale and a context for women's religious activity the house was almost an irrelevance.

Despite the domestic setting, in which women might be thought to be prominent, men performed the majority of the rites associated with the house, even including those surrounding the birth of a child and its naming. Central to domesticity is the act of cooking, for which the hearth (personified as Hestia) was crucial. But this was not a woman's religious place. Particular offerings do not seem to be made to Hestia by women: there were small offerings of food made by those eating, but this is rather unspecific (*Hymn Hom. Hestia* 29; Porph. *Abst*. 2.20.1). As a setting for women's ritual, the hearth was surprisingly unfrequented. For the most important religious rite performed at the hearth was that of the Amphidromia ('going around'), in which a newborn child at the age of five days was carried around the hearth—by the father—thus indicating his acceptance of the child as his own. This was the first step towards the recognition (eventually) of that child, if a son, into the body of Athenian citizenry. While the women's role is ancillary at the most, this was very much a family ritual, an essential one for the recognition of the child's legitimacy. Women who had attended the birth were present too, possibly as part of a recognition that this indeed was the infant who had been born (Amphidromia: Pl. *Tht*. 160e with schol.; Apostol. 2.56 (*CPG* ii.278); Ath. 9.370d; s.v. *amphidromia* in Harp., Hesych., and Suda; and see Jameson 1990: 193; Parker 2005: 13–14; Beaumont 2012: 67–8).

Similarly, family cults of Zeus Phratrios ('Of the Brotherhood') and Zeus Herkeios ('Of the Courtyard') were so important that they could be used as evidence of genuine Athenian citizenship. These were family,

household rituals in which men were the principal participants, that of Phratrios concerning the legitimacy of offspring, and Ktesios as a protective deity of household property—both crucial concerns for Athenian males. Women played little role in these: when Kiron made a sacrifice to Zeus Ktesios it was *he* who organized all the details and preparations (Antiph. 1.15–19; Zeus Ktesios: Parker 2005: 15–16; Faraone 2008: 216–17). When sacrifices were made within a household courtyard, such as for this rite, the women may well have been present and have let out their ritual ululation, but they did not preside over the sacrifice and were not active participants in it. Women were, in a sense, 'crucial' bystanders as part of the family group, ululating to make their contribution.

Yet, on the other hand, the symbol of Zeus Ktesios—the *kadiskos*, a small terracotta vessel—which was set up in the house, had its handles wreathed with wool, was decorated with saffron-coloured thread, and filled with ambrosia. Such domestic touches seem very appropriate for women, but the main source, Antiklides' *Exegetikon*, seems to be instructing a *male* to see to these details, in a similar manner in which it was the male head of the household in Theophrastos' 'Superstitious Man' (*Deisidaimon, Char*. 16) who decorated the house's Hermaphrodite statues, and not his wife (Antiklides *FGrH* 140 F22 (Autoklides 353 F *1), Ath. 11.473b–c). On the shape: Ath. 11.473b (from Philemon *On Attic Words or Glosses*); see Harrison 1927: 297–301; Cook 1940: 1054–7; Rose 1957: 100; Faraone 2008: 216–17).

Theophrastos' *Deisidaimon*, and these rites of the Amphidromia and Zeus, indicate that religious rites in the *oikos* were actually male-initiated, organized, and controlled, contrasting with Plato's complaint, which makes it seem as if the household was dominated by women's religious practices. If the 'Superstitious Man' sees a snake in the house he will invoke Sabazios or found a shrine in the house. He purifies his house regularly, alleging that Hekate has put a spell on it; on the fourth and seventh days of the month it is he who makes sacrifices to and wreaths the Hermaphrodite statues in the house. Although Theophrastos' intention is to ridicule this man, what he does is provide a small sketch of what could be considered fairly routine household rites, and it is the *man* who is responsible for these, not the wife. Despite Theophrastos' attempt to raise a laugh from the reader, he nevertheless presents a very credible narrative

of the religious discourse within the family of the house: it was the male head of the *oikos* who was responsible for its chief religious concerns. Moreover, many centuries later, Porphyry describes in very similar terms the religious life of an Arkadian man, Klearchos, who attended to his Hermes and Hekate once a month (*Abst*. 2.16.4; Faraone 2008: 210–11). As Rose long ago recognized, the essential religious acts and beliefs of all Greek households were similar: it is simply that they are exaggerated in the case of the 'Superstitious Man' (Rose 1957: 107).

Returning to the wife of the house, she was, in fact, somewhat dispensable in religious matters. The husband takes her to the Orpheus rites to be initiated each month: but if she is too busy, he substitutes the wet nurse instead, who can look after the children who also attend the rites. Snakes, Hekate, and Hermaphrodites—all religious matters that could affect the well-being and prosperity of the household—he makes his responsibility. This is especially striking in the case of Hekate, primarily a goddess with women attendants who sacrifice dead puppies into chasms and clefts (Theophr. *Char*. 16, ll. 4, 7, 10, 11).

The 'Superstitious Man' and his concerns about Hekate direct attention to a form of religion which one might think women would readily practise, and one which Faraone has discussed: the use of 'magic' by women in the household (2008: 218–22). But the evidence for this is, unfortunately, very slim. At Kyrene, when it was thought that a 'demon' had been sent against a household, it was not women who were involved in its removal, but rather the 'man of the house' (the 'Kyrene Purification Law': *LSCG*, suppl. 115, A29–39; Parker 1993: 332–51; Faraone 2009: 219–20). Despite women's especial affinity with Hekate, they were not empowered to exorcise her presence. Alternatively, it could suggest that women were not trusted to practise these rites within their homes, and that, in fact, it would have been very dangerous for them to do so. Women who were involved in magic at Athens tended to be sentenced to death by the courts, especially if they were foreigners (cf. Eidinow 2010).

WOMEN IN THE HOUSE: AMULETS, SHRINES, HERMS

One of the difficulties in finding evidence for women's involvement in religious activity within the house is highlighted by Faraone who, in specifically discussing 'women and magic in the *oikos*' (2008: 218–22), finds only one category of evidence relating to women's magical practices: amulets. These provided a socially acceptable method by which a woman could invoke supernatural forces to protect her child, employing magic for her family's benefit. Amulets in Athens are particularly known from red-figure *chous* vases, showing children wearing a string of amulets, passed from one shoulder to under the opposite arm, which mothers will have been responsible for attaching.

These apotropaic devices came in a variety of shapes: circles, crescents, and double axes (esp. Beaumont 2012: 62–3, fig. 3.14; shapes: 62; cf. Hamilton 1991: 105, pls. 4, 5, 9, 14; and Parker 2005: 298–300, figs 17–18). Women's partiality for the use of amulets is made clear in a charming anecdote: Plutarch, in a passage drawn from Theophrastos' *Ethika* (written in the late fourth century BCE), describes how Perikles, lying in bed dying of the plague, showed one of his friends who was visiting an amulet which the women (presumably of the family) had hung around his neck, as if Perikles is saying (notes Plutarch) that he really was in a bad way, having to tolerate such nonsense (Plut. *Per*. 38.2).

Religion for women within the household was, therefore, largely a matter of having their own shrines and altars, which they set up themselves in an exercise of independent religious initiative; these were not necessarily erected with the concerns of the family in mind. Men ran the 'religious show' at home. So when Euripides describes Dionysos sending the women of Thebes mad with bacchism, leaving their looms and children, and being driven from their houses *outside* to worship the god, this is more than a cultic reality (Eur. *Bacch*. 32–6, 216–20, 664–5, 699–703). They worshipped Dionysos in the fringe locations of the extra-polis territory in the country because he was a liminal god, but also because the house was not somewhere where women routinely held group religious rites (Eur. *Bacch*. 32–6). Yet women at Athens did not practise such liminal outdoor rites of Dionysos, but worshipped him within interior spaces. Athenian scenes of women worshipping a mask of Dionysos and drawing wine from large pottery vessels occurred somewhere inside. These women, worshipping Dionysos, do so without their families: it was

not the function of the family to worship this god, nor to experience *enthousiasmos*.

Turning from the indoor rites of women to their outdoor activities, there could be shrines just outside the door of the house. The ‘Superstitious Man’ was worried about the influence of Hekate, and apparently at least some houses had shrines to her outside the door (*FGrH* 140 F22), obviously to counter her malevolent influence. At the door there were also herms, blocks of wood or stone with *ithyphalloi* and the head of the god Hermes, to avert evil from the house. Women had a role in the setting up of a new herm image, and carried pots of pulses to the place where it was to be, which were then offered to the image (Ar. *Pax* 923–4, with Parker 2005: 19–20).

Both men and women are shown in scenes on Athenian vases worshipping herms. On one vase a woman is shown decorating a herm with a ribbon (*LIMC* s.v. Hermes no. 125), while it is only a woman, of course, who could be shown actually grasping the sides of a herm in physical entreaty (Figure 17.1; *LIMC* s.v. Hermes no. 154; *ARV*^{2} 931.4). This gendered nature of gesture and worship, with men not touching statues of the gods, is indicated by one vase depicting two herms: on the left a woman reaches out to touch the face of the herm on the left, while on the right an older man touches the beard of the herm, which he is supplicating. Men do not grasp herms (or statues generally): they always reach for a herm’s beard in a gesture of supplication (*LIMC* s.v. Hermes nos 130, 153 155).

FIGURE 17.1 A woman importunes a herm. Athenian red-figure cup, tondo (interior), 470–460 BCE, Berlin Staatliches Museum 2525. (Courtesy of, and ©, the Berlin Staatliches Museum.)

WOMEN ON THE HOUSE: THE ADONIA

Again, just outside the house—or more specifically on top of the house—the annual Adonia festival was celebrated. Adonis and his rites at Athens indicate that it was obviously not the case that the ‘polis anchored,

legitimated, and mediated all religious activity' (Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a: 15). Women's rites (Thesmophoric or Dionysiac) were generally within polis parameters, but women's involvement with the Adonia and their independent religious activities run counter to this paradigm of polis monopoly on religion. (For bibliography on the Adonia, see Dillon 2002: 339 n. 143; also: Dillon 2003, 2006a; Goff 2004: 139–43; Parker 2005: 283–8.)

While the choice of the roof as the location for the Adonia may have been influenced by Canaanite religious practices (see, in this volume, Bremmer, Chapter 40), it is also interesting to note that venues for women's rites that were not specific festivals sanctioned and organized by the state would have required the women themselves to find their own venue for worship. Within the house itself would have been one possible location, but flat roofs were an ideal alternative, accommodating a number of women. In a culture in which major temple and sanctuary foundations were, of necessity, the financial responsibility of the state, except in a handful of cases, this avenue of religious expression—establishing places of worship—was an important display of piety for women.

Nowhere is the contrast between women's formal polis religious activity more clearly contrasted with an informal religious activity than at the Adonia. Formal religious activity was sanctioned, organized, and financed by the state because this centred on its concerns. Yet women could also participate in religious acts separate from this polis framework, organizing all the various details themselves, for rites reflecting their own (non-polis) concerns. As a contrast, there are women's roles at two polis festivals: the Panathenaia and the Thesmophoria.

Young adult, virgin women had a particular and spectacular role to play in the Panathenaia. Captured in marble on the east Parthenon frieze they are sculptured carrying bowls, libation jugs, and incense burners; surprisingly, they are not shown in one of their main roles, as basket bearers (*kanephoroi*). Dressed in heavy robes with immaculately arranged hair, they were fitting and crucial members of the Panathenaic procession and the succeeding sacrifices in honour of the virgin goddess, Athena. Their moral probity as unmarried virgins was a reflection on their family's honour (Thuc. 6.56.1–2 and Arist. *Ath. Pol*. 18.2: Harmodios' sister rejected as a basket bearer).

In this, the most spectacular and important of Athenian festivals, the young women engaged in a formal, structured rite organized by the state. Similarly, the Thesmophoria was a state-sponsored festival, which only married women who had borne children attended, worshipping Demeter for the fertility of the soil of the countryside, and for themselves and other women (Dillon 2002: 110–19). Both the Panathenaia and Thesmophoria were celebrated on behalf of the state and organized by it, whereas the Adonia was a private celebration unconnected with the concerns of the polis.

Moreover, the Adonia involved a much more personal relationship with the deity being venerated than those worshipped at state festivals. No other festival was more epiphanic and closely related to mimicking the behaviour of a deity, in this case Aphrodite. It was women by themselves, rather than as family members, who came closest to the gods' own lived experiences and emotions. Women's ecstatic rites, such as those of the women of Thebes for Dionysos, the empathetically epiphanic rites of the Adonia at Athens, and those for Sabazios, existed at the margins of Greek polis religion. For the Classical period, only the Adonia rite as celebrated in Athens is known in any sort of detail (as Photion noted, s.v. *Adonia*), but Adonis was clearly worshipped elsewhere (Sappho FF 140, 168; Paus. 1.22.3, 2.20.6; *PMG* 747).

Myth explained the festival: Adonis, a mortal, beloved by Aphrodite, was killed by a boar, having incurred Artemis' wrath (Apollodoros 3.14.4 (183, 185); *LIMC* s.v. Adonis nos 32, 36, 38, 38a, 39a–d, 39e, 40). Within a mythological paradigm, an oppositional dichotomy is constructed between the two goddesses: Artemis the virgin, disinterested in her sexuality, and Aphrodite, goddess of sensuality. Adonis, beloved of Aphrodite, should not have intruded into the realm of the virgin huntress. Women worshipping Adonis and Aphrodite will have known this myth—commemorating the death of Adonis was crucial to the celebration—and articulated in their own fashion, not a rejection of Artemis, whom they relied upon for assistance in childbirth, but their embracing of the concept of true love, mourning the death of Aphrodite's lover and thereby celebrating their own erotically charged sexuality.

To settle the dispute between Aphrodite and Persephone for 'possession' of the child Adonis, Zeus decided that Adonis' time would be divided into three: four months to himself, four with Persephone, and four with

Aphrodite. This diachronic splintering of Adonis was reflected in the timing of his festival: at the very beginning of spring, Athenian women celebrated the rite at precisely the time when Adonis would have returned to Aphrodite after a winter in Hades. Women mourned for Adonis by filling broken terracotta pots with soil, and sowing them with lettuce seed; they took these pots, referred to as 'Gardens of Adonis', onto rooftops. Women gathered together in groups, as friends and neighbours. When Adonis was dying, Aphrodite laid him in a bed of plants: the rite commemorated and recalled his death. Athenian vases represent the cultic activity: Aphrodite is shown with her feet on the bottom of the ladder while a wingèd Eros hands her half an amphora from which vegetation is shown growing; women witness the scene, experiencing an epiphany of the goddess (*LIMC* s.v. Adonis no. 47; other scenes: nos 48–9). Ascending the ladder onto a rooftop, she will celebrate the death of her beloved Adonis.

In Menander's play *Samia*, a *hetaira* living in a house with her Athenian citizen lover celebrates the Adonia with an Athenian citizen wife next door (Men. *Sam.* 35–46). She is not a 'prostitute' (*porne*) in the sense of the word at Athens, and it is not to be imagined that citizen wives and prostitutes celebrated the festival together—these two groups of women did not mix in religious contexts at Athens. What allowed these two particular women to come together was the *hetaira*'s very mimicry of Athenian domesticity. Women prostitutes did, of course, have their own religious practices, and there is good evidence for these at Athens (Dillon 2002: 190–8), but they were debarred from festivals of the polis reserved for citizen women, such as the Thesmophoria. That a *hetaira* could participate in company with a citizen woman at the Adonia shows the degree to which the Adonia was not part of polis religion. As a rite it controverted a basic polis dichotomy—autochthonic citizen Athenians as opposed to outsiders, female outsiders at that. Other religious rites enforced this dichotomy: for example, the basket bearers (*kanephoroi*) at festivals such as the Panathenaia could only be young Athenian women.

Nor is it incidental that Aristophanes in the *Lysistrata* emphasizes the disjunction between state and Adonia by having a magistrate complain that he had once heard the women mourning for Adonis during a meeting of the assembly concerning the sailing of the Sicilian Expedition (415 BCE; Ar. *Lys*. 387–98). There was a clear separation between the days when the polis celebrated festivals and when it held civic meetings (whether of the

ekklesia or the jury courts). But the magistrate reports that while the *ekklesia* debated and passed motions, the women mourned and cried out, 'Beat your breasts for Adonis' (Ar. *Lys*. 396). They were not being deliberately subversive, it was simply that the political concerns of the state were irrelevant to the women's Aphroditean religiosity, and their festival was not part of the civic religious calendar.

Plutarch also describes the women celebrating the Adonia when the proposals for the Sicilian expedition were passed (Plut. *Nic*. 13.11; *Alc*. 18.5). His interest was in the inauspicious omen this represented in the context of the expedition; the women's complete disassociation from the political and military events of the time, and their focus on their emotional ritual, is clear. Yet this does not mean that Adonis and the Adonia represented the opposite of the martial virtues of the polis. Adonis is not to be considered as being 'held up' by the state as the opposite of the hoplite who represents the polis values of virility and citizenship, and who fights for the state (cf. Segel 1991). Rather, this rite is foremost concerned with sexuality and women's emotions.

Neither a state cult nor a citizen male cult, the Adonia was transformed in the Hellenistic period, at least at Alexandria. This makes this women's religious activity fairly unique, for women's role in other religious rites—such as the Panathenaia, Thesmophoria, and Dionysia, to name just a few festivals, did not evolve over time—indeed the Adonia at Athens itself remained a private celebration. Theokritos, in his *Fifteenth Idyll*, describes an official celebration of the Adonia at the court of Queen Arsinoe II, sister and wife of King Ptolemy II Philadelphos, at Alexandria. While the principle protagonists in the *Idyll* are two Alexandrian women, the Adonia has moved from its humble rooftop celebration in Athens to a structured one in the Hellenistic period, organized by the state and incorporated into the formal religious calendar. The contrast could not be clearer—the 'non-polis' nature of the Athenian Adonia was transformed in Alexandria into a court ritual lacking the spontaneity of the Athenian rite, disempowering the women who became mere spectators, hurrying to the royal court as spectators rather than climbing a ladder onto a friend's rooftop as participants.

CONCLUSION

Athenian families worshipped together in various rites, mainly at home and when they visited shrines together; state-cult did not invest the family as an entity with any particular religious status. Family religion was centred within the house or at shrines and temples. Deliberate and specific preparations were made by a family before setting out for a sacrifice at, for example, shrines of Asklepios.

As members of a family, women attended numerous public and private sacrifices and ate meat at them alongside their male relatives; they went with the family to worship gods who could be of particular assistance to that unit. But they worshipped some deities, such as Artemis, by themselves, and when celebrating the birth of their children at her sanctuaries, as in the Echinos relief, they did so with their women servants and friends, rather than with their family. They took part in rites such as the Adonia, which somehow women had established for themselves, presumably with the permission of their husbands, and which they celebrated without official sanction.

Meanwhile, in contrast to what might be expected, men had charge of what might be called the 'official religion' of the house, in rites such as that of Zeus Herkeios. The women of a family spent the greater part of their religious lives outside of the family structure: when a woman in a fragmentary play claims that women have a larger share in the worship of the gods than men do and lists women's religious roles, it should not be surprising that none of the rites mentioned are family oriented (Eur. *Melanippe Desmotis* F13; similarly with the list given in Ar. *Lys*. 641–7).

SUGGESTED READING

Various scholars have written about 'domestic religion' or 'household religion' in ancient Greece; these terms can be more fully defined as religious rites celebrated by a family and or its members within the physical space of the house or immediately proximate to it (for Greek

household religion, see Nilsson 1954 and 1961; Rose 1957; Jameson 1990: 192–4; Faraone 2008).

Over half a century ago, Rose (1957) penned the first detailed English language treatment of religious activity within a Greek household. His was unashamedly a descriptive approach, his aim being to recover the evidence, not to pursue it for wider meanings. However, it has become the foundation work for later studies, outlining the evidence that recent studies interpret in detail (such as Faraone 2008; cf. Nilsson's general treatments: 1954 and 1961). Rose's description of the cult of Zeus Ktesios is still better than any today, especially as he took the opportunity to quote obscure ancient sources.

Most recently, Faraone (2008) discusses various aspects of household religion, focusing on the definition of *oikos* and *genos* and their relationship to Athenian religious rituals. In particular, he discusses the male-oriented household cults of Zeus Ktesios and Zeus Phratrios, and, in dealing with women's rites within the *oikos*, focuses on their use of magic. Women's cults, festivals, and general religious practices are exhaustively treated by Dillon 2002 and Goff 2004, who argue that women were involved in numerous state and personal religious activities.

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CHAPTER 18

RELIGION IN COMMUNITIES

KOSTAS VLASSOPOULOS

INTRODUCTION

RELIGION and community were deeply intertwined in ancient Greece. This can be expressed from two opposite perspectives. On the one hand, Greek religion was, to a very significant extent, communal; there were, of course, many cultic and ritual acts that involved only individuals or families, but the clear majority took place in various communal contexts. On the other hand, almost all forms of Greek community had a religious basis, in addition to any other political, economic, social, or cultural features (Hansen and Nielsen 2004: 130–3). Communal discourses, concerns, and disputes fundamentally shaped how Greek communities organized their cultic life and negotiated religious innovation, while religion provided communities with a language that could serve communal purposes.

Modern scholarship has long realized the significance of the communal aspects of Greek religion (Burkert 1995). An influential current of scholarship, as exemplified by the approaches of the Paris School (e.g. Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992) and the ground-breaking contributions of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (2000a, 2000b), has argued

that Greek religion is so fundamentally communal, that it is effectively the religion of the polis. While this approach undoubtedly has value, as we shall see, it has tended to create a misleading polarity between the religion of the polis, which serves communal cohesion, and religious aspects and practices which cannot be easily accommodated within this scheme (magic, curses) and are seen as marginal. Equally problematic is the related approach that distinguishes sharply between the public cults of the polis and private religious associations, and constructs a narrative in which the crisis of the polis and its communal religion from the Hellenistic period onwards gave greater prominence to private cults and the needs they served (e.g. Bremmer 1994: 91–4). More recent contributions have challenged the functionalist premises of this traditional approach (Gabrielsen 2007; Eidinow 2011; Kindt 2012). Greek polities included a diverse range of communities, both public and private, whose membership often overlapped. Religious communities were not static entities, but continuously reformed, divided, dissolved, and interacted in tandem with a variety of religious and other processes. Religion provided both a means of communal cohesion, as well as an arena for division and conflict.

This chapter starts by identifying the range of forms of communities that existed in the Greek world from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period; it goes on to describe the range of religious activities that took place within them; finally, it examines the significance of religion in the articulation of communities and their identities, its role within communal life, and its problems.

THE RANGE OF COMMUNITIES

Greek polities, whether poleis (city-states) or *ethne* (regional/federal states), were organized as communities of citizens that incorporated, in various ways, a wide range of other communities (Jones 1987). We are best informed about the case of Athens. Athenian territory was divided into 139 demes, settlements that ranged from small hamlets and villages to towns and neighbourhoods of the large conurbation of Athens. Groups

of demes constituted the ten tribes into which Athenian citizens were distributed after the reforms of Kleisthenes. To be an Athenian citizen one needed to become a member of a deme, as well as one of the *phratries*, groups based on fictive kinship with their own structures and rituals (Lambert 1993). The citizen community of Athens therefore comprised three other forms of communities (demes, tribes, and *phratries*); alongside the political, administrative, military, and social roles that these communities performed, they were all constituted as religious communities and they formed the building blocks of Athenian religious life. In addition, the Athenian polis also included communities which fulfilled certain religious functions: the *gene* were communities in charge of certain cults and sanctuaries and also provided their priests (Parker 1996: 56–66), while the *orgeones* performed sacrifices to various gods and heroes of Attica (Ferguson and Nock 1944; Ferguson 1949; Arnaoutoglou 2003: 31–60).

Athens was exceptional in the fact that the whole region of Attica comprised only a single polis; in other areas of the Greek world, poleis and other smaller communities within a region formed federal polities, which were known as *ethne* (Mackil 2013). In the same way that Athens comprised both the local communities of the demes and the overarching community of the polis, *ethne* consisted of both a wide range of local communities as well as a federal community. Alongside their political, social, and economic functions, *ethne* were religious communities with their own sanctuaries, festivals, and other religious activities (Morgan 2003: 107–63).

While the above communities were part of the public infrastructure of Greek polities, others were created and maintained as private initiatives (Arnaoutoglou 2003; Ismard 2010). These private associations took a variety of forms. Many were associations of individuals practising the same trade, such as traders, sailors, smiths, actors, or mercenaries (van Nijf 1997). The creation and maintenance of trust, a crucial aspect of many professional activities, was facilitated by common cult activity (Rauh 1993). Others were associations of people with the same origin, who lived as immigrants far away from home. Many associations combined shared ethnicity and profession with the worship of an ancestral deity, which allowed immigrants to create a cohesive community that could provide them with support and solidarity in the difficult circumstances of

living abroad: in Hellenistic Delos the association of the merchants and ship-owners from Phoenician Tyre worshipped Herakles, the Greek interpretation of their native deity Melqart, and the association of the merchants, ship-owners, and agents from Berytos worshipped Poseidon. Each celebrated their own festivals and banquets, possessed their own communal buildings and sanctuaries, had their own priests, and instituted their own regulations that governed various aspects of communal life (Baslez 1977: 206–12). While many private associations were communities formed on the basis of profession or ethnicity, in which religion played an important role, most of them were communities specifically created by individuals joining together for the worship of a deity. Some of these exclusively religious associations worshipped deities that were also part of the public pantheon, but not always; and sometimes the gods were newcomers (Poland 1909; see, in this volume, Anderson, Chapter 21).

Private religious associations start to appear clearly in the epigraphic record from the later fourth century onwards (Gabrielsen 2007); it was accordingly long thought that this was evidence of the crisis of the Classical polis and of the substitution of public communities by private associations as the most important context of religious activity from the Hellenistic period onwards (Davies 1984: 315–20). This view is no longer tenable, as the importance of both public and private communities for Greek religion in the Hellenistic and Roman periods is now widely accepted (Mikalson 1998), but there is as yet no consensus on the importance of private associations in Archaic and Classical Greece (cf. Parker 1996: 333–42; Jones 1999). Public and private religious communities existed in conditions of constant osmosis, interaction, and interdependence (Gabrielsen 2007). On the one hand, public communities provided the structure adopted by most private associations once the latter appear as formally constituted bodies. Public communities were organized as assemblies that elected magistrates, took decisions on common affairs, and voted honours for members and benefactors. Private associations largely adopted the same format with significant consequences for the conduct of their religious affairs. On the other hand, public communities often co-opted cults initially established by private associations, and this was one of the major means through which new cults entered the official pantheon of Greek communities. The cult of Bendis probably started

informally within the Thracian community at Athens; but by the later fifth century Bendis had been adopted into the official Athenian pantheon and the Thracians were formally constituted as *orgeones* in charge of the cult (Parker 1996: 170–5).

The last example shows that we should not consider these diverse public and private religious communities as static and self-enclosed entities. Religious communities were involved in a continuous process of formation, transformation, and dissolution. Membership in different communities could overlap; the boundaries of communities could vary according to circumstance, or change over the course of time. Participation in cult activities was not always tantamount to participation in the communities that organized and celebrated these activities; communities could restrict or expand the circle of participation in particular sacrifices or processions (see e.g. the sacrificial calendar from Hellenistic Mykonos: *LSCG* 96). In the city of Bargylia in Karia two Hellenistic decrees regulate the festival of Artemis Kindyas (*SEG* 45.1508A–B): the first decree establishes a procession and sacrifice of cattle and provides for the distribution of the sacrificial meats to the citizens divided by tribes; the second provides the sum of 100 drachmae to the metics (resident foreigners) to buy and raise sacrificial animals, so they can participate as well in the procession, sacrifice, and division of the meat (Zimmermann 2000).

Such practices could also create new communities with mixed memberships, like the religious associations of soldiers. Communal cults gave soldiers a means of expressing and solidifying the links created by campaigning together, sharing the same tent and mess, serving in the same unit or garrison. Religion also enabled the creation of new communities out of disparate elements: citizens serving together for a single campaign, citizen and mercenary soldiers fighting together, mercenaries from the most disparate origins found, in religious associations, a potent means of creating a cohesive community (Launey 1950: 1001–36).

Joining religious associations could also allow those who had been oppressed by or excluded from a community to find fellowship. A fourth-century Athenian inscription records a dedication by a mixed group, which included four males who were probably citizens or metics, six males who were probably slaves or freedmen, and two females (*IG* II² 2934). What brought these individuals together was their common profession as

washers; the ex-voto is, appropriately, to the nymphs, the deities of water on which their livelihood depended. Another fourth-century inscription from the mining area of Laureion records a dedication by an association whose members' names indicate that they were slaves or freedmen and point out their diverse ethnic origins; forming an association and making a joint dedication to a deity was a means of creating a new community (*IG* II² 2940). In the opposite direction, communities could split and dissolve; a particularly well-known example concerns the Athenian *genos* of the Salaminioi. A fourth-century inscription records an arbitration that tried to resolve disputes between two divisions of the *genos*, the Salaminioi of Sounion and the Salaminioi of the seven tribes, by deciding that priesthoods would be held jointly and both groups would contribute to sacrifices, while common property would be divided between them; a century later, when another arbitration is recorded, the two groups of Salaminioi have become separate *gene* (Lambert 1997).

The diversity of communities, their overlapping memberships, and their continuous adaptation and reformulation reflected the fact that religion enabled individuals and groups to create communities that could be employed for a range of purposes. Religion provided a field within which individuals and groups could negotiate their position within the community. Serving as a priest, organizing a festival, or paying for its expenses were powerful means of making and maintaining social capital in Greek communities (Schmitt Pantel 1992: 255–420; Dignas and Trampedach 2008). Rituals and cults provided ambitious individuals with the means of transforming their personal networks into communities under their leadership. The phenomenon is particularly prominent in the great commercial centre of Hellenistic Rhodes; the association of the Asklapiastai Nikasioneioi Olympiastai created by Nikasion, a metic from Kyzikos, in which he enrolled his relatives and many of his associates, and which owned property and celebrated games, shows how a personal network could be transformed into a religious community with a corporate existence (*IG* XII, 1 127). Soldiers and sailors in Rhodes joined together to form religious groups under the leadership of their commanders: these religious associations gave to these commanders an opportunity to employ the goodwill of their members for their own political, economic, and social aims (Gabrielsen 2001).

THE RANGE OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Similar religious activities took place across a range of different contexts. The consecration and dedication of objects in various forms to divinities was a ritual readily undertaken by individuals or on behalf of families and households, but communities engaged in this practice as well (Kindt 2012: 123–54). Curses and divination were ritual practices used by both individuals and communities in order to deal with risk and uncertainty (Parker 2000; Eidinow 2013). Sacrifice was undertaken by both individuals and communities as a means of honouring the gods (Parker 2005a: 37–49, 2011: 124–70). There were, of course, certain religious activities that *prima facie* seem to take place only within communities: for example, festivals. Many festivals took the form of rituals involving the mass and collective participation of the community; but there were also important festivals that lacked mass rituals and collective participation and took the form of celebrations held within each individual household, such as the Athenian Pyanopsia or Kronia. Finally, the aims for which communities communicated with gods often overlapped with the aims of individuals and households: the aversion of evil, safety at land and sea, success in agriculture and other wealth-getting activities, or the protection of marriage and reproduction were aims wished for by individuals, households, and communities both separately and collectively (Parker 2005a: 395–451). There is no single and no simple dividing line between religion within communities and religion in other contexts; it is rather a matter of circumstance and degree (Kindt 2012: 12–35).

Accordingly, religious activity in Greek communities can be located within a spectrum between the two extremes of the obscure and the spectacular (Jameson 1999). In terms of the more ‘obscure’ were ritual activities undertaken by priests, magistrates, or specified individuals on behalf of the community, but with minimal or no participation and attendance by the community. The sacrifice of a small animal every other year to a relatively obscure deity included in the fourth-century Athenian calendar of sacrifices (*SEG* 21.540) is unlikely to have attracted large crowds, and was probably only attended by the magistrate or priest who performed the sacrifice along with a few other attendees. The rites of the

Athenian Arrhephoria were secretly performed by two maidens, who lived on the Acropolis and were entrusted with the carrying of certain sacred objects, by night, into a natural underground passage (Parker 2005a: 219–23). These were rituals whose correct and punctual performance was considered important for community welfare and its proper relationship with the gods; but they only involved a few individuals performing those rituals on behalf of the community.

At the other extreme, the 'spectacular' is the mass participation and attendance of the members of a community in the fundamental ritual of sacrifice and its closely attached activities: the procession bringing sacrificial animals and sacred objects to the altar and the temple, the songs, dances, and prayers accompanying the sacrifice, the distribution of the sacrificial meat, the communal feast, and the athletic, musical, and dramatic competitions that accompanied important religious activities. In a world without weeks and weekends, the great communal festivals marked those periods in the year when everyday activities could be set aside in order to celebrate, to enjoy impressive visual displays, special food and plenty of wine, to mingle with relatives, friends, and fellow citizens, to see, flirt, and form liaisons with members of the opposite sex (Parker 2005a: 155–91). Numerous Hellenistic decrees for big festivals provide a free day from study for schoolchildren and from work for slaves (*LSAM* 33), and require the wearing of special garments and crowns (*Syll.*^{3} 398).

Between the 'obscure' rituals undertaken on behalf of the community and the 'spectacular' great festivals, we have to locate the immense range of practices in which religion was deeply intertwined with all the different aspects and constituencies of the political, social, and cultural life of Greek communities. Most communal activities included religious rituals. Political meetings were preceded by purifications, sacrifices, prayers for the welfare of the community, and curses against its various enemies; public documents were stored in temples, like the Temple of the Mother in Athens, and were often displayed under the protection of the gods in sanctuaries, even carved on the walls of temples, as in the case of the Archaic laws of Crete (e.g. ML 2); the participation of citizens in warfare was preceded by sacrifices and omen-taking to establish favourable terms. Another example of these rituals was the swearing of oaths (Cole 1996). The ritual involved the sacrifice of one or more animals and the invocation

of one or several divinities ‘over’ the victims or by touching the sacrificial altar. In Athens, being appointed to most offices required the swearing of oaths binding the citizen to the community: magistrates, members of the council, and jurors had to swear oaths. In the fourth century, Athenian ephebes annually swore by a range of Athenian deities to defend their country and uphold its laws (Siewert 1977).

The range and frequency of religious activities within these various communities varied significantly. Let us focus on Athens again, where the depth of the existing material allows us to see the picture most clearly. Some communities appear to have had a limited range of activities, restricted to a single festival, sacrifice, or feast held infrequently, or once a year. Tribes provided the organizational groupings through which citizens participated in many of the religious activities of the polis community; but the religious activities of the tribes themselves seem to be restricted to the cult of their eponymous hero. *Orgeones* largely met once a year, to sacrifice and feast on behalf of their hero; a fourth-century lease of the sanctuary of the hero Ergetes shows that his sanctuary was used only once a year for the sacrifice and feast of the *orgeones*, and was otherwise used by the lessee for secular purposes (*IG* II² 2499). The case of *phratries* is more complicated, but it seems that their religious activities primarily took place at their annual meeting when they celebrated the important three-day festival of the Apatouria (Parker 1996: 102–8).

It is, accordingly, the community of the demes and the community of the polis that formed the two major contexts of Athenian religious life (Parker 2005a: 50–78). We can distinguish three levels of religious activities within these communities. There were activities that only took place within the demes; there were activities that took place exclusively at the polis level; and there were activities that lay in-between. Some festivals and rituals, such as the rural Dionysia and the pre-ploughing rituals of the Proerosia, were celebrated only at the level of the demes; there were also festivals like the Pyanopsia, Anthesteria, and Thesmophoria, which were celebrated both in the demes and the city; finally, there were city festivals that were celebrated only centrally by the polis and in which deme members participated and/or sent their sacrificial offerings; we shall examine the festival of the Panathenaia under the section ‘The Role of Religion in the Articulation of Communities and their Identities’. The demes formed the local communities in which Athenians

lived (Whitehead 1986: 176–222). In the fourth century, the deme of Erchia devoted twenty-five days annually to the sacrifice of fifty-nine animals, mostly sheep and goats (*LSCG* 18). Even more impressive was the frequency of ritual activities at the level of the polis: the Old Oligarch complained that it was impossible to get any business done in Athens due to the large number of festivals that constituted public holidays (*Ath. Pol*. 3.1–2). Even if the standard charge that the Athenians celebrated twice as many festivals as the other Greeks is mistaken, undoubtedly the polis level constituted the most frequent locus of ritual activity (Parker 2005a: 161–2).

The range and frequency of religious activities within private associations also varied. Because communities like demes and *phratries* served public functions, they were formally constituted and had a permanent nature; private associations were voluntary and, accordingly, ranged widely in form and intensity. At the temporary and informal extreme, one could mention bands of people assembled for a particular celebration or to make a specific dedication, such as the bands (*thiasoi*) allegedly assembled by Aeschines' mother (Dem. *De cor*. 259–60); at the other extreme, were private associations which were formally organized, with their own statutes, magistrates, and assemblies, and which possessed their own communal buildings, sanctuaries, and cemeteries (Poland 1909: 330–498). Some associations, like many *orgeones*, largely assembled once a year to sacrifice and feast on behalf of their deity; others had monthly sacrifices, feasted on the occasion of birthdays of members and benefactors, and attended to the burial and cult of their dead members; finally, some associations organized their own processions on the festivals of their deities (Poland 1909: 246–70). Accordingly, many private associations exhibited a wider range and frequency of religious activities than many public communities.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND COMMUNITIES

Religion presented a potent means for creating social cohesion in Greek communities, and played a fundamental role in the articulation of communal identities; it also provided a range of discourses for negotiating communal problems. But the employment of cults and rituals within communities did not lead to monolithic and clear-cut perceptions and solutions; on the contrary, religion constituted an arena in which conflicting visions of relationships among humans, and between humans and gods, were continuously expressed and contested.

The Role of Religion in the Articulation of Communities and their Identities

Religion was a fundamental cohesive link for all Greek communities; the appeal to shared religious experience in sacrifices, rites, and festivals as a means of overcoming the ravages of the Athenian civil war of 403 BCE is a telling example (Xen. *Hell*. 2.4.20). Religion played a crucial role in forming the identity of Greek communities. Many communities took the name of the divinities they worshipped; the Athenian tribes were named after ten Athenian heroes, chosen by the Delphic oracle (Kron 1976). In some cases, there could also develop a close identification between communities and their patron deities (Cole 1995). The depiction of Athena, the patron deity of Athens, on Athenian coins is one such example; another is an Athenian fifth-century decree honouring Samos for her loyalty, accompanied by a relief depicting Athena and Hera clasping hands: the two chief deities of Athens and Samos are here used as symbols of the respective communities (*IG* II² 1).

Particular festivals were closely associated with the identity of the communities that celebrated them; according to Herodotos, the celebration of the festival of the Apatouria, alongside Athenian origins, was the essential feature of Ionian identity (1.147). The strong connection between the performance of ritual and communal identity can also be seen in the case of the Athenian demes. Rituals at caves, mountaintops, and other sacred locations linked the deme community to its landscape and to the divinities that occupied that landscape. Sacrifices to local heroes, often anonymous or parochial, but sometimes with a Panhellenic relevance as

well, played a significant role in the cultic activities of demes. The fourth-century calendar of Thorikos includes sacrifices to Kephalos, Procris, Helen, and Thorikos, all heroes whose myths connected them with the deme's history. Other anonymous heroes seem to have guarded areas of the deme's territory (*SEG* 33.147).

Religious activities played a crucial role in the creation, maintenance, and reproduction of the cultural memory of Greek communities (Chaniotis 1991). Sacrifices commemorated important historical events. The Athenians continued for centuries to celebrate annually the great victories of the Persian Wars: Marathon on the sixth of Boedromion, Salamis on the sixteenth of Mounichion, and Plataea on the third of Boedromion. Other Greek communities created festivals and processions in order to celebrate important historical events, such as the restoration of democracy in fourth-century Eretria (*LSS* 46). The Athenian public funerals for the war dead, in which appointed speakers addressed a funeral oration to the audience, were important for conveying a sense of history and communal cohesion (Loraux 1986).

The existence and survival of all these diverse communities depended on divine favour, and thus on honouring the gods through various ritual activities. The construction of elaborate temples, the lavish sacrifices and splendid processions, the maintenance (or invention) of traditional rituals played an important role in the coherence and identity of the community. The crucial elements of Greek cultic activity (procession, choral performances and hymns, sacrifice, and banquet) were ideally suited for creating strong communal bonds (Chaniotis 1995).

Processions, strictly speaking, aimed to accompany the sacrificial animals and other sacred objects and offerings to the altar or temple of the deity. But they also provided an excellent opportunity for visualizing and displaying the power and wealth of the community, its membership, and internal hierarchy, as well as linking the community to its territory. Centripetal processions moved from the periphery of the city, often the city gates, to the ritual centre, often a sanctuary on the acropolis, while centrifugal processions moved from the city centre into a sanctuary situated in the periphery of the community's territory (Graf 1996); we shall examine the centripetal procession of the Panathenaia under the section 'The Role of Religion in the Articulation of Communities and their Identities'.

A typical centrifugal procession is the one that took place in Miletos in the course of Apollo's festival: leaving from the city of Miletos, following the elaborate Sacred Way, and making sacrifices to various other deities, before finally reaching Apollo's extra-urban sanctuary at Didyma (*LSAM* 50). By traversing the territory of the community and linking the centre to the periphery, processions were a powerful statement of communal identity and communal possession of territory.

The order and form of participation in processions was a means of visualizing the membership and stratification of the community and its groups. The participation of magistrates, the procession of ephebes and citizens in arms, the organization of processions and sacrifices on the basis of civic subdivisions are widely attested (Chankowski 2005). This is already seen in Homer's description of the Pylians' sacrifice to Poseidon: they are divided in nine groups (*hedrai*) of 500 citizens, each sacrificing nine bulls, and sharing the roasted meat in a communal feast on the beach (*Od*. 3.4–33). The right to partake of the sacrificial meat was an excellent opportunity for defining who was a member of the community and who was excluded (Krauter 2004; see further, in this volume, Naiden, Chapter 31). A third-century group of Athenian *orgeones* stipulated that full shares of meat at its annual sacrifice would be distributed to male members and their wives, half shares to their children, as well as to a single female servant per family (*LSS* 20.17–23). Equally, activities like communal feasting after sacrifice provided an excellent opportunity for strengthening bonds (Schmitt Pantel 1992). But their significance meant that communal rituals could equally well generate conflict: Harmodios decided to murder the Athenian tyrant Hipparchos when the latter dishonoured his sister by excluding her from the prominent procession of the Panathenaia (Arist. *Ath. Pol*. 18.2).

Finally, religion enabled communities to negotiate their relationship with the outside world. Communities engaged in imperial expansion could use rituals to express and enforce it. The most famous example concerns the obligations of members of the Delian League to participate in the festivals of their Athenian suzerain by sending a cow and a panoply for the procession of the Panathenaia; the participation of the allies turned an Athenian ritual into an imperial festival (Parker 1996: 142–3). Religion also provided a means through which communities could conceptualize and negotiate their relationship with the new overlords that emerged in the

Hellenistic and Roman periods; the creation of cults for Hellenistic kings, for Rome and Roman magistrates during the Republic, and for emperors under the empire are different manifestations of this phenomenon (Price 1984).

The Panathenaic festival provides an excellent illustration of these various themes (Parker 2005a: 253–69). Aetiological myths concerning the festival celebrate its importance for communal identity; one attributed the original festival celebration to Erichthonios, the autochthonous ancestor of the Athenians, while another interpreted it as a commemoration of the unification of Attica by Theseus. The festival was thus associated with both the mythical ancestor of the community as well as with a dominant event in its history. It included athletic and musical competitions, in some of which the Athenians competed as groups divided by tribes; a *pannychis* (all-night celebration); a majestic procession bringing the new *peplos* (robe) to Athena; four sacrifices of large numbers of animals; and feasting in various public and private gatherings. The procession started at the Dipylon gate and crossed the civic centre of the *agora*, where stands were erected for spectators, before finally reaching Athena's altar on the Acropolis, where the sacrifice would take place. The procession provided an opportunity for displaying a particular image of the community and its various hierarchies. It included Athenian girls and women carrying various sacrificial and sacred objects (*kanephoroi*, *ergastinai*, *arrhephoroi*); metic girls and men in a subordinate but honorary role as parasol, stool, tray, and water bearers; Athenian boys and men as branch bearers; Athenian magistrates and representatives of other cities; the military forces of the community (ephebes, hoplites, cavalry); members of the demes; and, finally, foreigners and freedmen carrying oak branches.

Thus, the procession provided roles for all inhabitants of the community, even those excluded from citizenship, although with different prominence: exalted roles for the daughters and wives of the Athenian elite, subordinate roles for metics and freedmen. The distribution of the immense quantity of sacrificial meat by deme according to the number of participants in the procession stressed the democratic and communal aspect of the festival. But while all groups of citizens participated in some capacity, the military parade did not include the lower-class rowers, who only appeared as undifferentiated deme members. Characteristically, the

version of the Panathenaic procession depicted in the Parthenon frieze excludes demesmen and middle-class hoplites and gives prominence to upper-class cavalry and charioteers. Equally, the participation of metics in subordinate roles could be seen as either honorary inclusivity, or as ritual demarcation of their inferior position in the community (Maurizio 1998). Accordingly, the use of rituals to strengthen community cohesion was always accompanied by ambiguities and contradictions.

The Role—and Problems—of Religion within Communal Life

Because religion and communities were so closely intertwined, religion provided a discourse within which contradictions, disputes, and aspirations within communities could be expressed, negotiated, and contested. This was due to the fundamental fact that the distinction between Church and State, so essential to the religious history of the Christian West, is deeply misleading for the Greek case (Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a: 19–20). Priests did not form a separate caste and were not members of a unified organization; instead, they were citizens who were appointed or inherited the right to serve in ritual capacities in particular sanctuaries, and who largely lacked any separate religious authority of their own.

There are occasions when priests representing the interests of their sanctuaries are seen to clash with political authorities, as seen in a long-term conflict during the Hellenistic period between the priest of the sanctuary of Zeus at Labraunda and the community of Mylasa regarding control over sacred land and priestly perquisites (Dignas 2002: 59–66). But this relative independence of priests and their sanctuaries from the community could only emerge in circumstances where there existed external authorities to which priests could appeal: such was the case with Hellenistic kings and Rome, but this was rarely possible in Archaic and Classical Greece (Parker 2011: 52–3). Priests were not the sole mediators between the community and the divine (Parker 2005a: 89–99). Sacrifices and prayers on behalf of the community could be offered by both priests and magistrates, while magistrates were often in charge of religious activities: in Athens the eponymous *archon* organized the processions of

the Asklepeia, the Great Dionysia, and the Thargelia, while the *basileus* was in charge of the Eleusinian mysteries and the Lenaia (Arist. *Ath. Pol*. 56–7).

Decisions concerning religious matters were taken by the citizen assembly and the other community institutions. Out of the forty annual scheduled meetings of the Athenian assembly, twenty compulsorily devoted the first three items of the agenda to the discussion of sacred matters (Arist. *Ath. Pol*. 43.6). The religious matters legislated by Greek communities ranged widely (Lupu 2009: 9–102). They included the upkeep and protection of sanctuaries (*LSCG* 37); the provisioning and conduct of festivals (*LSCG* 65); the establishment of new rituals and festivals (*LSAM* 32); the perquisites and roles of priests (*LSCG* 156A); and, finally, rules for funerals and mourning (*LSAM* 16). Although the community could legislate on practically every aspect of religious life, it would be misleading to think that there existed no other sources of religious authority: these included influential oracles, like Delphi, as well as itinerant and local seers and *exegetes*, religious specialists who provided guidance on issues like pollution and the performance of rituals (see, in this volume, Flower, Chapter 20, and Iles Johnston, Chapter 32). But all these alternative sources of religious authority had no power to impose their views on individuals or communities; they were only there to advise. Accordingly, it was only when the community opted to ask for and implement such advice that external sources of religious authority affected a community's religious practices (Parker 2004).

Communal discourses, concerns, and disputes fundamentally shaped how Greek communities organized their cultic life and negotiated religious innovation; on the other hand, religion provided communities with a language that could serve communal purposes. Public oaths and public cursing enlisted religion in maintaining loyalty to the community and its priorities, and in taking pre-emptive actions against threats to communal stability. The community of Teos in the fifth century BCE proclaimed annually public curses against individuals who made spells against the community, obstructed the import of corn, tried to overthrow the constitution, betray the city's territory, engage in piracy, or plot against Teos (*SEG* 4.616). The community invoked divine authority in order to strike pre-emptively against individuals acting against communal welfare and used the ritual of public cursing in order to make a powerful statement

of communal values (Parker 2005b: 76–7). ‘Scapegoat’ rituals provided a means of averting danger and evil from falling on the community (see further, in this volume, Bremmer, Chapter 40).

At the same time, the problems and crises of communal life led members of the community to use religion in other ways. We have seen how communal institutions like the courts employed rituals such as oath-taking for jurors; the other side of the coin is how community members engaged in the processes of these institutions employed religion within their range of strategies to cope with danger, risk, and uncertainty. An illuminating example is the writing of binding spells against opponents in trials, their witnesses, and the jurors, a practice widely attested across the Greek world (Eidinow 2013: 165–90). As with all the religious practices described, these were another way in which ritual practice offered individuals and groups a range of possible ways to relate to other members of their communities and to the divine world, generating networks of relationships and different personal identities in different contexts (Eidinow 2011).

Pollution and impiety offered a discursive field for negotiating disputes and contradictions within the community. Because the welfare of the community depended on maintaining divine goodwill, any act that threatened to destabilize the relationship between communities and gods could potentially be perceived as a dangerous form of impiety (see, in this volume, Bowden, Chapter 22). Accordingly, impiety was understood broadly to cover both issues relating specifically to the deities, as well as those issues crucial for the order of society and the favour of gods (Connor 1988). The prosecution of impiety provided an avenue through which communities could identify the source of their problems and find a means of dealing with them. Several prosecutions for impiety are known from Classical Athens, the most famous of which is the trial of Sokrates for not acknowledging the gods of the polis and for corrupting the young (Parker 1996: 199–217). Debates within the community about what constituted impiety and magic and how they related to the phenomenon of religious innovation, and the construction of narratives in order to address these issues, show that religion constituted an arena of both negotiation and division within the community (Eidinow 2010).

Greek religion and communities were intertwined in various ways. Greek religious communities came in a wide range of forms, which

continuously transformed and interacted with each other. The absence of a Church as a separate religious institution meant that Greek communities had direct control over their religious affairs; it also meant that religion suffused all aspects of communal life. As a result, religion both reflected the tensions and challenges of communal life and provided discourses for expressing and negotiating them; it constituted both a means of creating solidarity and articulating communal identities, as well as an arena of contest and conflict.

Suggested Reading

The best introduction to public religious communities in Greek history remains Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a and 2000b, supplemented by the critical remarks in Eidinow 2011 and Kindt 2012. Important studies of public religious communities include Ferguson and Nock 1944 and Lambert 1993, while Ismard 2010 provides a stimulating network approach. Poland 1909 is still the fundamental work for private religious associations; Gabrielsen 2007 provides a thought-provoking survey of the ways in which more recent work has built on and challenged the approaches of Poland's time and later, while the diversity of private religious associations is fruitfully explored in Arnaoutoglou 2003, Rauh 1993, and van Nijf 1997. Long-term histories of public and private religious communities are rarely possible for any place except Athens; Parker 1996, 2005a, and Mikalson 1998 provide a long-term narrative of communities in Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic Athens. For the diversity of religious activities within communities, Jameson 1999 is fundamental. The role of religion in communities for identity formation and communal cohesion is well explored in Chaniotis 1995 and Schmitt-Pantel 1992, while Eidinow 2010 focuses on contestation and challenge; Maurizio 1998 provides a comprehensive account of how one particular festival could provide cohesion and identity alongside dispute and challenge.

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CHAPTER 19

REGIONAL RELIGIOUS GROUPS, AMPHICTIONIES, AND OTHER LEAGUES

CHRISTY CONSTANTAKOPOULOU

INTRODUCTION: LOCALITY, REGIONALITY, AND GREEK RELIGION

LOCALITY is an extremely important concept for our understanding of Greek religion. Even within the territory of a polis, heroes and gods (through their cult epithets) were linked with specific locales (Parker 2003). Religious practice, however, existed beyond the boundaries of the polis, both in a geographic sense and the sense of the currently dominant model of interpretation, that is, the model 'polis religion' (Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a, 2000b). Religious activity in the Greek world took place on many levels, which, for the moment, we can classify as 'local', 'regional', and 'Panhellenic', although these categories are far from being unproblematic themselves (cf. Versnel 2011: 110). The focus of this chapter is religious activity on the level of 'regional' and 'Panhellenic'.

But although ‘region’ is a useful hermeneutical category, allowing us to move beyond the constraints of the polis, at the same time it needs to be explained (Davies 2001a). While, in modern scholarship, a ‘regional’ approach has enhanced debates on the economy (e.g. Reger 1994), this has not occurred in the study of political institutions (Vlassopoulos 2007: 166–8).

Religion is one area where a regional approach can prove fruitful. If we understand ‘region’ as a geographic space characterized by increased connections that may provide the background for the emergence of a common sense of identity, then religious activity is a context in which we can witness such connections. Sanctuaries, for example, had ‘catchment areas’ of worshippers, which varied from the local, to the regional (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985). An example of a local case would be an ‘extra-urban’ sanctuary (de Polignac 1995), such as the sanctuary of Artemis in Brauron in rural Attica. This can be described as a ‘local’ sanctuary for north-eastern Attica, since it attracted worshippers from not just the immediate area, but all over the territory of Athens (Parker 2005: esp. 228–30).

The boundaries, however, between what can be considered ‘local’ and ‘regional’ are by no means straightforward. Which classification, for example, fits best the cult centred at the Heraion at Samos? Investment in the cult was considerable from an early time (Kyrieleis 1981; and, in this volume, Scott, Chapter 16). The history of the monumentalization of the sanctuary reveals the history of the polis of Samos, with its fluctuations of power and wealth; the Heraion has been described as a ‘local island sanctuary’ (Kyrieleis 1993: 129). However, the finds from the sanctuary, including a number and variety of imports almost without parallel for the Greek world, imply that the cult centred on the Heraion appealed to a much larger catchment area.

Categories such as ‘local’ and ‘regional’ are historically embedded, and, consequently, the typology of any given cult may change over a period of time. I offer the following definition: ‘regional’ are those cults whose appeal transcended the borders of their immediate geographical surroundings, normally those of the city-state where the centre of the cult was located. However, even this definition includes considerable variations of scale. The sanctuary of Apollo Ptoios, close to Boiotian Akraiphia, attracted dedications from both Boiotia and Thessaly, from the very start (the eighth century). In the late seventh and sixth centuries it

became an impressive centre for the dedication of *kouroi*/*korai* statues (Ducat 1971; Schachter 1981: 52–73). It was clearly not a 'local' sanctuary for the region of Akraiphia, but its regional appeal did not expand beyond its Archaic catchment area (de Polignac 2009). In comparison, the Panionion at Mykale is an example of a more extensive 'regional' religious group. The Ionians, Herodotos tells us (1.148), dedicated the Panionion in Mykale to Poseidon of Helikon; there, Ionians used to meet to celebrate a festival to which they gave the name Panionia. Diodorus (15.49.1) adds that, at some point before 373, the Panionian festival and the common Panionion meeting had moved to Ephesos (Hornblower 2011b). This indicates a large catchment area, with political and ethnic overtones, especially in the period of the Ionian revolt; participation in the Panionion during the sixth and fifth centuries may even have marked a process of ethnic definition of 'Ionianism' (Kowalzig 2007: 102–10). In terms of religious activity, we can classify both the Panionion and the cult of Apollo Ptoios as 'regional' religious groups, but they are clearly operating at different registers.

Where does 'regional' appeal end and 'Panhellenic' appeal begin? The concepts of 'Panhellenism' or 'Panhellenic' appeal are hotly debated (Scott 2010: 16–21; Kindt 2012: ch. 5; Skinner 2012: 211–9). If one looks at the Classical period, it becomes clear that the Greek world understood as 'Panhellenic' those sanctuaries which formed the four-year agonistic cycle of the crown games, the *periodos*: Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, and Nemea. But it is important to note that the category 'Panhellenic' was not a fixed one: Delos and the cult of the twin gods can also be understood as a sanctuary with a 'Panhellenic appeal' (Rolley 1983; Schachter 2000: 11). No cult centre was 'Panhellenic' from its inception. Indeed, the archaeological evidence from these sanctuaries seems to point to an initial regional appeal, which expanded considerably over the Archaic period (Morgan 1990, 1993). By the end of the Archaic period, these sanctuaries, and the games associated with their festivals, attracted worshippers from all over the extensive Greek world. It can also be said that participation in the games and cult of, primarily, Olympia and Delphi, contributed to constructions of Hellenic identity (Hall 2002: 134–71; Skinner 2012: 211–31). But can even this clearly widespread appeal be termed 'Panhellenic', when these sanctuaries and their festivals still did not encompass, in the same way, the entirety of the Greek world?

AMPHICTIONIES

A formal expression of interaction between worshippers from a wider geographical area can be found in the institution of amphictyonies, also spelled amphictionies (Sanchez 2001: 32–7). The alternative spellings reveal some confusion about the origins of the word, which is also reflected in Pausanias' account of the origins of the Delphic amphictiony (Paus. 10.8.1, quoting Androtion *FGrH* 324 F58; see also *Etym. Magn*. s.v. amphictyones). The spelling *amphi-ctiones* may be understood as loosely equated with *peri-ctiones*, 'dwellers around, neighbours' (*amphictiones*, Hdt. 8.104, Pind. *Pyth*. 4.66 and 10.8, *Nem.* 6.39; *periktiones*, Hom. *Il*. 18.212, 19.104, Pind. *Nem.* 11.19, and Thuc. 3.104. See Chankowski 2008: 21–4). Indeed, the amphictionies that are explicitly attested as such in our ancient sources can be understood as regional networks of those who are 'dwellers around', even if such an interpretation refers to a network of maritime neighbours. The spelling *amphictyones*, however, does not easily fit this linguistic interpretation. Instead, it was linked in antiquity with an eponymous hero Amphictyon, who, according to some traditions, founded the Delphic amphictiony (Hdt. 7.200.2; Paus. 10.8.1, quoting Androtion *FGrH* 324 F58; and *Marm. Par. FGrH* 239 A5). Whatever the origins of the word, both spellings were used to denote the Delphic amphictiony in epigraphic records (*CID* 4.1; Rusch 1914: 35–8).

Formal political collaborations for the running of the affairs of a sanctuary were not restricted to amphictionies; some of the regional sanctuaries discussed may have been managed by representatives of more than one city-state. Yet the Greeks used the term amphictiony not as a generic term for a religious association, but to denote a specific religious network, managing the cult normally situated on a sanctuary (Ehrenberg 1969: 108–11; Tausend 1992; Forrest 2000). The following religious networks are specifically attested as amphictionies (in sources dating mostly from the Classical and Hellenistic periods though, undoubtedly, such institutions were rooted earlier in the Archaic period): of Kalauria (modern Poros in the Saronic Gulf; Strabo 8.6.14, quoting Ephoros *FGrH* 70 F 150. See Wells, Penttinen, and Billot 2003; Mylonopoulos 2006; Constantakopoulou 2007: 29–37; Pakkanen 2007, 2008, 2011); of Boiotian

Onchestos (Strabo 9.2.33; see Tausend 1992: 27–34; Kowalzig 2007: 365–7); and, of course, of Delphi. Modern scholarship occasionally adds Delos to this short list, but, in this context, the term seems to have been appropriated by fifth-century imperial Athens (see further below in 'Case Study 1: Delos').

The best-known amphictiony was that of Delphi. Archaeological evidence, such as dedications, along with processes of monumentalization at the sanctuary, indicate that Delphi acquired a regional and then Panhellenic appeal during the ninth to seventh centuries (Morgan 1990; Bommelaer 1991: 183–4). This can be partly (but not wholly) attributed to the fame of the Delphic oracle, but this is not the only reason. Dedications, such as the new Temple of Apollo, probably finished by *c*.510 (Bommelaer 1991: 181–2; Scott 2010: 56–60), the treasuries of Corinth, Sikyon, and Siphnos, or free-standing monuments, such as the Naxian sphinx (Partida 2000), can be viewed as contributing to the development of the self-awareness of the relevant communities (Giangiulio 2010). Whatever the 'regional' appeal of Delphi in the early Archaic period, by the sixth century it had grown to encompass large sections of the Greek world, and, in that sense, can be viewed as 'Panhellenic'. The institution of the Pythian Games, probably at 586 (or alternatively 582 BCE; see Paus. 10.7.2–5 and *Marm. Par. FGrH* 239 A37 respectively), enhanced the considerable fame of the sanctuary and its cult, and became one of the four games that constituted the *periodos*.

If we can trace relatively well the development of the sanctuary in the Archaic period, the same cannot be said for the Delphic amphictiony (Lefèvre 1998; Sanchez 2001). To reconstruct its history, we depend on mythical narratives, which may or may not be reflected in the archaeological record, and whose historicity has been debated in modern scholarship. The origins of both the cult of Apollo at Delphi and the Delphic amphictiony are linked with an obscure episode in Archaic Greek history, the so-called First Sacred War, traditionally placed in the early decades of the sixth century (see Robertson 1978 challenging the war's historicity, and Davies 1994 and 2007 for a reconsideration). While it is true that such traditions about the war were shaped by later struggles for control of the amphictiony and sanctuary, most notably during the fourth century, literary evidence, such as the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (540–4) and the Hesiodic *Aspis* (478–80), seem to imply some major disruption in

the Delphic sanctuary and Apolline cult in the Archaic period. Recent archaeological excavations also support this (Rolley 2002; full publication of the excavation in Luce 2008). As the name implies, the First Sacred War was not the only one fought for control of Delphi. The fifth and fourth centuries saw three more sacred wars (the second in the middle of the fifth century, Thuc. 1.112.5, see Hornblower 2011a; the third between 356 and 346, see Buckler 1989; Sanchez 2001: 173–99; and Hornblower 2009; the fourth in 340, see Sanchez 2001: 227–43). These involved the major powers of each period and had far-reaching political and military repercussions.

The wars suggest that a prominent feature of the history of the Delphic amphictiony was the struggle for control of the religious network of Delphi. We know the amphictiony had twelve members, but, with origins probably in the early seventh century and changes over time, the list in our ancient sources varies (Sanchez 2001: 37–44, 518). One of the main responsibilities of the amphictiony was the management of the sanctuary and its games, the Pythian Games, which, as we have seen, were one of the four crown games of ancient Greece and an extremely prestigious event (Lefèvre 1998: 237–9). The amphictiony also had to monitor the proper use of the sacred land that belonged to the sanctuary, including the sacred plain of Kirrha (e.g. the amphictionic law of 380 BCE, *IG* II^2 1126 = *CID* 1.10, with Sanchez 2001, 153–63). The struggle between pasturage and land cultivation is at the heart of the sacred wars, and the cultivation of the plain of Kirrha by the Phokians was one of the main events that started the Third Sacred War (Aeschin. 3.108; Rousset 2002: 183–205; McInerney 2010)

The amphictiony was not, strictly speaking, a political body: participation in the amphictiony meant managing affairs at Delphi. But, at the same time, there is no denying that the amphictiony occasionally played an important role in non-religious (in the wider sense of ‘political’) conflicts. Access, influence, and even control of Delphi and its regional appeal acquired increasing importance during its history. What role the amphictiony played in the realm of political affairs has recently been debated (Bowden 2003; Hornblower 2009). We should not expect the role of the amphictiony to have remained unchanged over its long history, nor for ‘political’ affairs to have had the same impact on this institution in different periods of time.

REGIONAL RELIGIOUS NETWORKS

Amphictionies were a formal expression of the networking required for the management of cult centres with a wide appeal. Such regional networks varied in scale: from a limited catchment area, perhaps only just surpassing the limits of a cult's local community, to the great 'Panhellenic' sanctuaries. Religion contributed to the creation of a regional identity through shared religious action, but when we talk about 'religious' activities at such sites, we need to consider social networking, consumption and production of goods (Morgan 2003: 149–55, for the early Archaic period; Davies 2001b, for the Classical period), markets (Davies 2007: 63–5), and high 'political' events, such as the declaration of freedom for the Greeks by the Roman herald in the Isthmian Games of 196 BCE (Polyb. 18.46; Livy 33.32).

Delos and Samothrace provide examples of cult centres with regional religious networks, which demonstrate interesting similarities and differences. Both cult centres were located on islands with relatively small populations: for both, their development depended from the start on worshippers from beyond the local community. Access to these sanctuaries also depended on maritime connections. However, whereas Delos was central to the maritime routes of the south Aegean (Strabo 10.5.1; Plin. *HN* 4.12.65; for Callimachus, the islands 'danced around Delos', *Hymn* 4.16–22), the sea around Samothrace was considered 'rough' (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.61.4), making access to the island difficult—although this may have enhanced the appeal of the sanctuary and its mysteries.

Case Study 1: Delos

According to myth, Delos was the birthplace of the twin gods, Apollo and Artemis. Considering its importance in the mythical narratives of the Greek pantheon, it is not surprising that Delos became the centre of an extensive regional religious network from an early date. The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* praises Delos and sings of the festival celebrated on the island, emphasizing the role of the Ionians (l. 144–55) who played a key

role in the network around Delos. Thucydides (3.104) quotes this passage when describing the Athenian reorganization of the festival during the 420s and constructions of Ionianism (Hornblower 2011a). The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, as well as Odysseus' comparison of Nausikaa to the young palm tree of Delos (*Od*. 6.162–3), shows that Delos had acquired considerable fame during the early Archaic period.

The archaeological evidence from the sanctuary can help explain how this happened (see Figure 19.1; Bruneau and Ducat 2005; and the series *Exploration Archéologique de Délos*). After a marked gap of material dating from the Dark Ages, the second half of the eighth century shows a variety of imports, including the tell-tale sign for cult activity: tripod dedications. Investment in monumentalization takes place around *c*.700, with the construction of a building called Temple Γ, and, soon afterwards (early seventh century), the Archaic Heraion and Artemision (Mazarakis-Ainian 1997: 179, 182; Bruneau and Ducat 2005: 176, 209, 280). While tripod dedications seem to point to elite individuals actively displaying status, power, and piety, constructions of buildings in the sanctuary presuppose the pooling of resources, suggesting community investment. This may have been done by the Delians themselves, or at the encouragement/instigation of outsider island communities (e.g. the Athenian Alkmeonids funded the second Temple of Apollo at Delphi, Hdt. 5.62). If it was the Delians, then the construction of three early buildings suggests considerable resources, which must have originated from wealth brought into Delos, either as dedications, or as direct funding for a building programme.

The seventh century saw the erection of yet more buildings, most notably the construction of the *oikos* of the Naxians, whose first phase dates from the second half of the seventh century (Lambrinoudakis 2005). The name of the building, attested in the Classical inventories, shows its direct links with Naxos—and the Naxians have a spectacular presence in the sanctuary of Delos during the seventh and early sixth centuries (Prost 2014). In the early sixth century, they dedicated a colossal Apollo (*ID* 49); in the mid-sixth century, they erected a stoa at the western side of their *oikos*. They were also behind the erection of the remarkable Terrace of the Lions, which lined the west side of the road to the sanctuary from the north (Barlou 2014). However, rather than projecting onto the Archaic period notions of imperialistic control (as the island experienced during

the fifth-century Athenian imperial domination), and seeing this as evidence of Naxian political/economic control, I would argue that Archaic Delos was a place where communities and elite individuals conspicuously displayed their wealth, importance, and claim for power. Naxian investment was a display of glory and wealth in the competitive arena of regional sanctuaries.

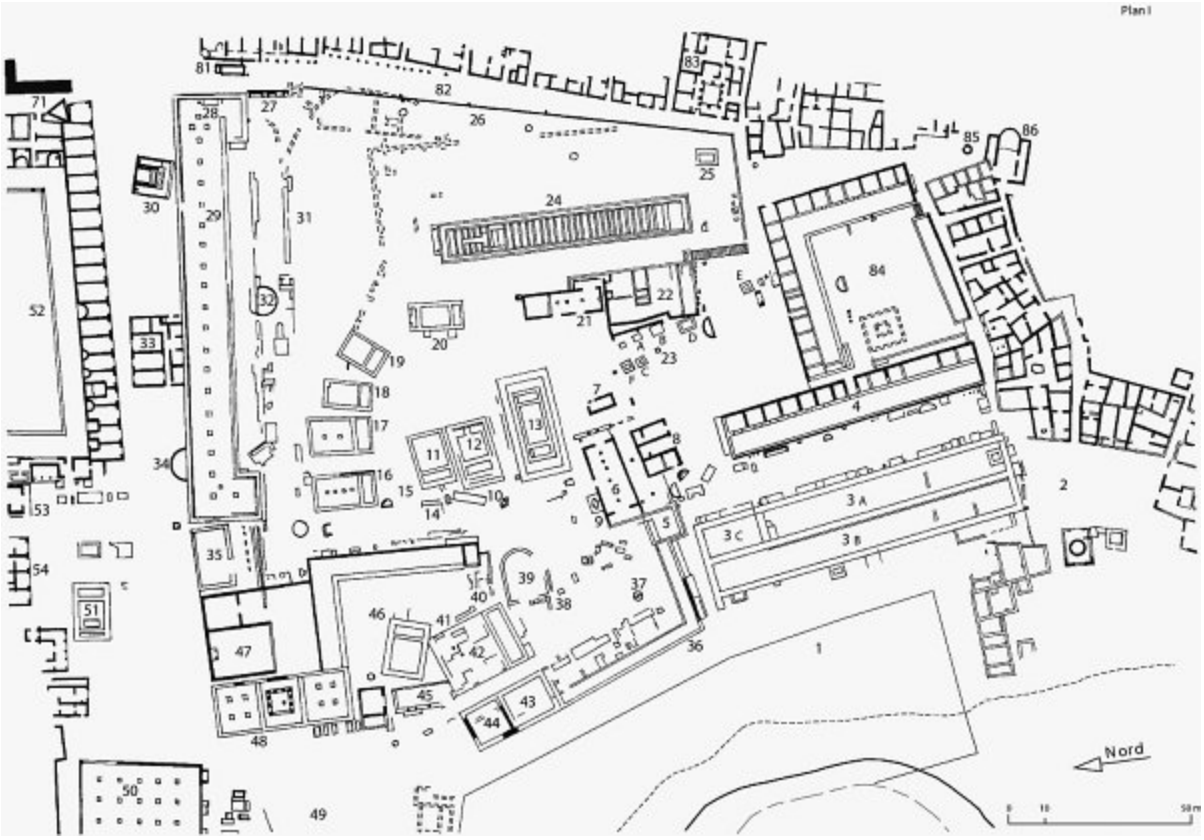

FIGURE 19.1 Plan of the sanctuary of Delian Apollo at Delos, from Bruneau and Ducat 2005, plan 1. © EfA.

(6) *oikos* of the Naxians; (7) Temple Γ; (9) base for Apollo; (11) *Porinos Naos*; (36) Naxian Stoa; (44) Parian *oikos* (?); (46) Artemision

The construction of *oikoi* for specific communities in the sanctuary of Delos may be our most solid indication for the active participation of communities in the cult of Delian Apollo. These ‘houses’ marked an occasion of appropriation of previous elite dedications, placing them firmly within a new communal, or political (in the sense of the polis as a political community) framework (Neer 2001, 2004). There was an *oikos*

from Paros (Bruneau and Ducat 2005: 203–4), Andros, Karystos, and (probably) Mykonos—and possibly others (Bruneau and Ducat 2005: 171), and a Keian *hestiatorion* (Hdt. 4.35.4). This monumentalization of the sanctuary shows that while the literary sources stress the Ionian character of the Delian network, the cult seems to have appealed to Ionian and Dorian islanders (Chankowski 2008: 16–20, 30–1; Kowalzig 2007: 56–83)—a network of island participants, rather than an Ionian network (Constantakopoulou 2007: 38–58). This continues: in the Classical and Hellenistic period, the nomenclature of dedications, recorded in the extensive inventories of the sanctuary, reveals a strong island constituency (Tréheux 1992).

The Delian cult network in the Archaic period, therefore, had a predominantly southern Aegean island catchment area. I have argued that the archaeological record cannot be used to show political or economic domination over the sanctuary and, consequently, its cult network. But one power in this region showed substantial interest in Delos, and her history became intrinsically linked with it: Athens. The Athenian tyrant Peisistratos purified the part of Delos visible from the sanctuary by removing all burials to the neighbouring island of Rheneia (Hdt. 1.64.2; Thuc. 3.104.1–2; Parker 1996: 87–8; Constantakopoulou 2007: 63–6; Chankowski 2008: 10–14). He may also have been behind the erection of a monumental temple, the so-called *porinos naos*, dated to the second half of the sixth century (Bruneau and Ducat 2005: 182). These actions can be seen as statements of power, targeting the audience of the network of cult participants, and creating a context in which a version of Ionianism was constructed and displayed; and in which Athens had a dominant role. But it was the emergence of the Athenian empire in the fifth century, which had a more lasting impact on the cult network of Delos.

Athens, as the leader of the so-called Delian League (the modern name is indicative of the strong ‘Delian’ connotations of the Athenian imperial network), took meddling in the affairs of the sanctuary to a whole new level. The Athenians managed the sanctuary through a board of officials called ‘amphictyons’, who were all Athenians. Furthermore, when they purified Delos in 426/5, moving all tombs to the neighbouring island of Rheneia, they prohibited anyone from dying or giving birth on the island (Thuc. 1.8.1 and 3.104), turning the Delians into ‘polis-less’ citizens (Plut. *Mor*. 230c–d; Constantakopoulou 2007: 71–3; Chankowski 2008: 57–61).

These acts of aggression must have caused considerable distress to the Delians, who took advantage of the Athenian collapse at the end of the Peloponnesian War to become (with Spartan help) independent (between 402–393 BCE, following Chankowski 2008: 169–74). Delian independence was short-lived: Athenian control of the sanctuary quickly resumed, lasting until 314, when the Delians finally gained their independence (314–166 BCE, see Vial 1984). As these events demonstrate, one of the prominent features of the history of Delos was the almost continuous struggle for control of its most valuable asset, the sanctuary. Control of the sanctuary meant control over the considerable Delian finances it generated, privileged access to a large network of cult participants, and, of course, increased piety in the eyes of the gods.

Some scholars believe that the Archaic religious network around Delos was an amphictiony, similar to the one around Delphi (Tausend 1992: 47–55): the Athenians managed the Delian sanctuary through a board of amphictyons, while Thucydides refers to 'islanders and *perictiones*' as the main participants in the early festival on Delos (3.104.3). But this evidence does not prove that there was an Archaic amphictiony centred on Delos. Chankowski has argued convincingly that we should be looking at a regional cult network that was not an 'amphictiony': the Athenian use of 'amphictyons' was a conscious emulation of the Delphic parallel, which may be linked to the Athenian construction of a Pythion on Delos and the promotion of a cult of Apollo in its Pythian persona (Chankowski 2008: 20–28, 258–62).

The cult network of Delos was a regional network of the southern Aegean, with a strong island character. Delian cult may have been linked in myth and literature with an Ionian dimension, but it appealed to Ionian and Dorian islanders alike. These participants not only went to Delos to worship, attend the festival, and dedicate to the gods, they also imported the cult of Apollo Delios, Artemis Delia, and Eileithyia (another deity with strong Delian connections, Bruneau 1970: 212–9) to their own communities (Constantakopoulou 2007: 53–8; Kowalzig 2007: 72–9; Chankowski 2008: 30–1). This cult network had a long history, from the early Archaic period until Roman times, and it had an impact on the political sphere, especially during the period of the Athenian empire. In the Hellenistic period, Delos was one of the many locations where piety towards the gods became a showcase for control and power over the

Aegean region by the Hellenistic kings (Bruneau 1970). But it was Samothrace that saw a greater degree of investment in monumentalization during the Hellenistic period.

Samothrace

Samothrace, an island located in the north Aegean Sea, was famous for the sanctuary of the Great Gods and its mystery cult. Samothrace was settled by the Greeks in the early sixth century (Graham 2002), but evidence of sacrificial remains from the area of the *temenos* in the sanctuary indicates cult activity before the arrival of the Greeks (Lehmann and Spittle 1982, part 1: 267–9, 317; Lehmann 1998: 73). The cult of the Great Gods of Samothrace is an excellent example of the fusion of cult practices: those of the pre-Greek population of the island (called 'Pelasgians' Hdt. 2.51) were adapted and transformed by the Greeks. The language used in the mysteries of Samothrace included non-Greek words, and their incomprehensibility was an essential element of the cult's initiation processes (Diod. Sic. 5.47.3; Bowden 2010: 49–67).

As the main attraction of the Samothracian cult was its mysteries, it is inevitable that the literary traditions about the mystery cult and its mythological origins are obscure. The mythical stories about Samothrace seem to belong to a non-Greek world (Burkert 1993). Herodotos (2.51), describing the mysteries (and showing how they had wide appeal even in the relatively early historical context of the third quarter of the fifth century), refers to a 'sacred tale . . . set forth in the Samothracian mysteries'. This may have included the story of local hero Dardanos, who was born on the island, and who moved to Ilion and founded the royal family of Troy (*FGrH* 4 F23, see Lawall 2003). This story was celebrated in a lost play by Dymas of Iasos, who was consequently honoured by the Samothracians (*I.Iasos* 153; Rutherford 2007). Dardanos' and Aetion or Iason's sister, Harmonia, and her wedding to Kadmos were also part of these mythical stories (Diod. Sic. 5.48.4–50.1). The search for Harmonia, possibly in combination with a celebration of her marriage to Kadmos, was an important part of the mythical background to the Samothracian festivals (*FGrH* 70 F120; Marconi 2010: 125–8).

The traditions about the identity of the gods were particularly obscure and contradictory (Cole 1984; Burkert 1993: 186–7; Clinton 2003: 68–9). In epigraphic evidence, the gods appear always as the 'Great Gods' or the 'Samothracian gods' (outside Samothrace), but literary evidence provides a range of identifications: Kabeiroi (Hdt. 2.51 and Stesimbrotos of Thasos *FGrH* 107 F 20), Korybantes (Diod. Sic. 5.49.3–4), Axieros, Axiokersa, Axiokersos, and Kasmilos—sometimes identified with Demeter, Persephone, Hades, and Hermes respectively (Mnaseas Scholia to Ap. Rhod. 1.917 = *FGrH* 548 F1; see Lewis 1958, nos 150 and 150a). It is likely that this confusion of identities played a central role in the initiation process (Bowden 2010). In other words, we do not know who the Great Gods were, because the initiates themselves did not necessarily know. We can also understand this confusion as a necessary aspect of a cult based on secrecy (Blakely 2011).

The archaeological evidence from the sanctuary of Samothrace can enhance our understanding of this cult and its changing regional network (see Figure 19.2; Lehmann 1998). There is evidence for the construction of monumental buildings in the late Archaic/early Classical period, and Herodotos implies that the mysteries and cult were widely known in the fifth century. But it was during the fourth century and early Hellenistic period that an impressive building programme most changed the sanctuary. Some of these structures may have been funded by the Macedonian king Philip II (Lehmann and Spittle 1982; Lehmann 1998: 77–8), who may have met his wife Olympias while they were both initiated in the mysteries (Plut. *Alex.* 2.2). Hellenistic royalty continued to make monumental dedications (Cole 1984: 17–20; Mari 2002: 198–202). It seems that the sanctuary of Samothrace functioned as a key stage for a display of piety and power for the Hellenistic kings in their struggle for control of the Aegean after Alexander's death and throughout the third century.

In turn, the small finds from the sanctuary reveal the piety and participation of everyday individuals in the cult of the Great Gods. Thousands of sherds of Samothracian conical bowls have been left behind on the Eastern Hill (Wescoat 2012: 94–5). The shape of these bowls suggests they were used for libation; their large number that they were discarded by worshippers leaving the sanctuary, possibly because they were understood to belong to the gods. Two further categories of objects

seem to have played an important part in the cult: the purple belt and iron ring (Cole 1984: 29–30). The purple belt (presumably coloured by murex, harvested from the sea) was given to initiates during their initiation and was linked with salvation from dangers at sea (Scholia to Ap. Rhod. 1.917–8 = Lewis 1960, no. 229g, and 1.918a = Lewis 1960, no. 229h). Iron rings were also part of the initiation ceremony; thirty-two have been found (Lehmann and Spittle 1982: 403–4). Their most important feature seems to have been their magnetization, which obviously had an important ritual role (Blakely 2011: 61–4).

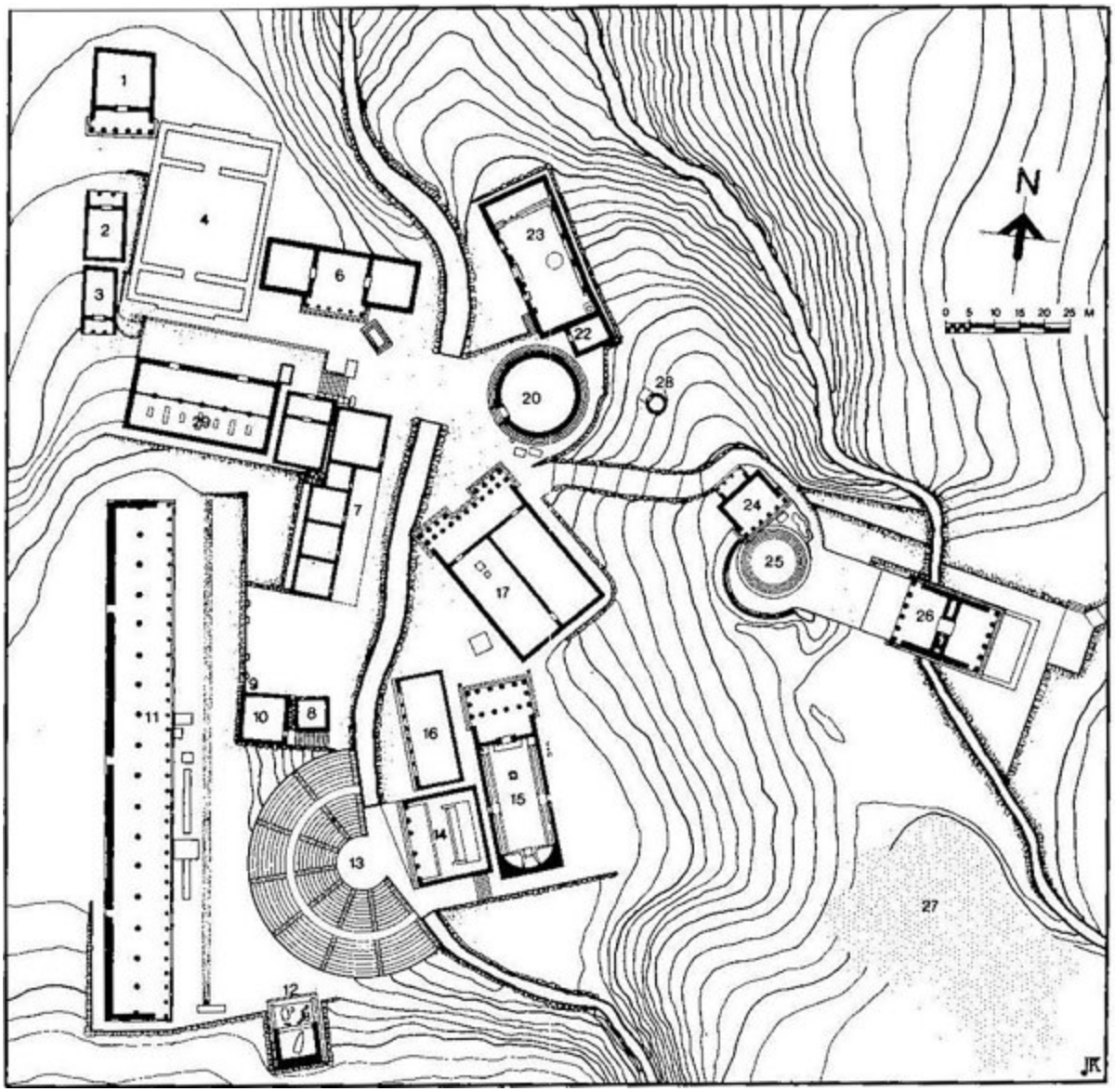

FIGURE 19.2 Plan of the sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace, from Lehmann 1998, plan 4. © James R. McCredie.

(1-3) unidentified Late Hellenistic buildings; (4) unfinished Early Hellenistic building (6) Milesian dedication; (7) dining rooms; (8, 10) unidentified niche; (9) Archaistic niche; (11) stoa; (12) Nike monument; (13) theatre; (14) altar court; (15) Hieron; (16) Hall of Votive Gifts; (17) Hall of Choral Dancers; (20) Rotunda of Arsinoe; (22) Sacristy; (23) Anaktoron; (24) Dedication of Philip III and Alexander IV; (25) theatral area; (26) *Propylon* of Ptolemy II; (27) Southern Necropolis; (28) Doric Rotunda; (29) Neorion.

These objects give some indication of the role and purpose of initiation into the mysteries: one of the primary reasons offered by our literary evidence was protection at sea (e.g. Ar. *Pax*, 277–8 with scholia; Ap.

Rhod. 1.915–8 with scholia; Diod. Sic. 4.43.1–2, 4.48.5–7, 5.49.5–6). The Samothracian sanctuary, like the Delian one, had a special connection to the sea: not only were both these sanctuaries located on islands, along with Samos, they were also places where ships were dedicated to the gods (Blackman 2001; Wescoat 2005). At Samothrace, the dedication of bronze fish hooks and shells in large numbers also reveals close connections between the cult and the sea (Lehmann 1998: 36–7 with fig. 14). Seafaring may have been widespread in Greek culture, but cults offering protection at sea were not particularly numerous. Samothracian initiation shared this role with the cult of deities such as the Dioskouroi and Aphrodite Euploia.

This was not the only benefit: Diodorus Siculus (4.49.6) also lists individual improvement; this combination is almost unique among mystery cults. At the same time, initiation in a mystery cult (any mystery cult) created a community of participation and shared experience (if not exactly of shared understanding), irrespective of the specific mystery (Clinton 2003; Bowden 2010). To this, we should add Samothrace's unique location and historical background, which made it an ideal meeting space between Greeks and non-Greeks (Blakely 2010)—as we have seen, elements of the cult practice maintained a pre-Greek, northern Aegean aspect.

We can trace Samothrace's initial appeal to its marginality and difficulty of access, especially when travelling from the southern Aegean world. However, as the focus of political power shifted from southern to northern Greece at the end of the fourth century, Samothrace acquired a certain centrality in the networks of northern Aegean, becoming one of the key locations where Macedonian royalty, in Macedonia and in Egypt, competed for conspicuous demonstrations of piety and power. Samothrace is not best understood as one of the great 'Panhellenic' cult centres of the Greek world, as it lacked a grand festival comparable to that at Olympia or Delphi. Yet its regional appeal during the early Hellenistic period covered the entire Aegean world. This is revealed by the nomenclature and ethnic names preserved in the Hellenistic (mostly second and first century BCE) lists of initiates and *theoroi* preserved in epigraphic texts (Cole 1984: 38–56; Dimitrova 2008). These reveal different, if significantly overlapping, networks of appeal (Rutherford 2009). *Theoroi*, or official representatives of communities sent to Samothrace, normally to take part in a festival or

make a dedication, came mostly from cities in Asia Minor, the north and southern Aegean, and were almost exclusively Greek. Initiates came from not only these same areas, but also Italy and Rome, as well as inland Thrace and Alexandria. In addition, the export of Samothracian cult through the presence of a large number of dedications to the Great Gods, or the Samothracian gods, in other sanctuaries of the Greek world indicates the spread of the cult network (Cole 1984: 57–86).

CONCLUSION

We have seen how regional religious networks operated at different scales: from the relatively restricted cult network of, say, Apollo Akraiphnios, to the almost Panhellenic appeal of Delos. Despite the difference in scale, however, religious cults and participation in a cult network played a key role in creating communities of worship, which, in turn, contributed to the creation and consolidation of regional and/or even ethnic identity (as in the case of the Panionion in Mykale).

In some ways, the attempt to answer the question of whether religious activity gave expression to an already established network of communications or vice versa is as futile as the answer to the question 'which came first, the chicken or the egg'. Such networks were historically contingent. Indeed, the early Archaic history of the great 'Panhellenic' centres of the Greek world does not suggest a 'Panhellenic' appeal. The religious network around Delos, for example, was transformed by its control, over the course of the fifth century, by imperial Athens. In contrast, Samothrace's appeal expanded considerably during the late fourth and early third centuries, perhaps linked to the changing political alliances of the early Hellenistic world, as well as the obvious Macedonian investment in the sanctuary.

SUGGESTED READING

On the tension between locality and Greek religion, see the critique on current models in Polinskaya 2006, Eidinow 2011, and Kindt 2012. An overview of ancient amphictionies can be found in Ehrenberg 1969, Tausend 1992, and Forrest 2000.

Bommelaer 1991 is the guide to Delphi. The excavations of Delphi are published in the series *Fouilles de Delphes*. The history of the Delphic amphictiony is presented in Lefèvre 1998 and Sanchez 2001. Other useful studies on the history of Delphi include Morgan 1990, Bowden 2005, and Scott 2010.

The guide to Delian antiquities is Bruneau and Ducat 2005, while the results of Delian excavations are published in the series *Exploration Archéologique de Délos*. The most important works for the history of Delos and its religious cult are Chankowski 2008, for the Classical period, and Bruneau 1970, for the Hellenistic and Roman periods. See also Constantakopoulou 2007, esp. Chapter 2 for a discussion of the Archaic Delian religious network. The guide to Samothrace is Lehmann 1998. The results of the excavations are published in the series *Samothrace: Excavations Conducted by the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University*. For the sanctuary, its network, and mystery cult see also Cole 1984, Burkert 1993, Dimitrova 2008, and Bowden 2010. A summary of recent discoveries is provided in Wescoat 2012.

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PART V

HOW?

CHAPTER 20

RELIGIOUS EXPERTISE

MICHAEL A. FLOWER

INTRODUCTION

IN 344 BCE an extraordinary set of portents surrounded the mission of Timoleon to unseat the tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysios II, in Sicily (Plut. *Tim.* 8 and Diod. Sic. 16.66.3–5). When the expedition was ready, Plutarch tells us, 'the priestesses of Persephone at Corinth had a dream in which they saw the goddesses getting ready for a journey and heard them say that they were intending to sail with Timoleon to Sicily. Consequently, the Corinthians equipped a sacred trireme and named it after the two goddesses.' When Timoleon had set sail and had reached the open sea during the night,

> the heavens seemed to break open over his ship and to pour forth a great and conspicuous fire. Then a torch, like those used in the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries, rose up and, running along beside his ship, descended upon the very part of Italy that the helmsmen were aiming for. The seers declared that the apparition confirmed the dreams of the priestesses, that the goddesses were taking part in the expedition and were displaying the light from heaven. For, they said, Sicily was sacred to Persephone, since her seizure [by Hades] is said to have taken place there, and the island was given to her as a wedding gift.

I have begun with this story because it serves as a good introduction to some of the main issues at stake in any discussion of religious expertise. Can the evidence from one city be used to generalize about practices and institutions elsewhere? What was the relationship between the various ritual experts that appear in our sources? What types of expertise did they possess? In this case, the Corinthians unquestionably accepted the truth of the claim of the priestesses (*hiereiai*) that the same dream had appeared to each of them (whether on the same night or sequentially is unclear); but then later the seers (*manteis*) who actually accompanied the expedition validated their claims by reference to a portent that appeared on the journey itself.

PROBLEMS OF TERMINOLOGY AND EVIDENCE

The two most common designations for religious experts that appear in ancient texts are the ones mentioned in the passage just quoted. They are commonly translated as priest/priestess and seer; but for the rest of this chapter I will privilege native terms (as is the practice in modern ethnographic studies). English equivalents, although convenient, carry a great deal of cultural baggage and can never adequately convey the cultural meaning of indigenous terms. What we mean by 'priest', for instance, overlaps only minimally at best with the Greek conception of a *hiereus*. Likewise, 'seer' is a culturally loaded term, as are the other words commonly used to translate *mantis*, such as 'prophet', 'diviner', or 'soothsayer'.

Before discussing 'priestly' expertise in the Greek world, it is necessary to offer a disclaimer. I am about to indulge in a type of generalization that is invariably misleading, and yet all too common in discussions of Greek 'religion'. First of all, there was a variety of types of sanctuaries, cults, and ritual performances in the Greek world. A large city such as Athens may have employed hundreds of *hiereis* and *hiereiai* serving many different sanctuaries (some in the city and some in the demes), each of

which sponsored particular festivals and cult activities. Although many Greek festivals followed the pattern of procession, sacrifice, public banquet, and competition, the particular forms and prayers would have varied; and some ritual enactments did not follow this pattern at all. What took place in the healing sanctuaries of Asklepios at Epidauros or of Amphiaraos at Oropos was very different from the rites of initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries. On the other hand, mystery cults and healing sanctuaries had routines that were categorically different from the activities involved in civic festivals such as the City Dionysia and the Panathenaia at Athens. Therefore, in trying to determine what a *hiereus* or *hiereia* does and knows, one size does not fit all.

A second problem is a tendency, in even the best modern scholarship, to combine evidence from different places (South Italy and Sicily, mainland Greece, the Aegean islands, Asia Minor) and time periods (the seventh century BCE through the third century CE) in order to compile a composite picture of ritual activity. This methodology levels the differences that must have existed in various times and places; since the forms of religious activity, whether in polytheistic or monotheistic systems, are never static. They are constantly evolving. The proper procedure would be to divide the evidence for *hiereis* and *hiereiai* by time, place, and type of sanctuary, and then to look for continuities and differences, as well as for innovations, both spatially and temporally. It would be a huge undertaking, but the results would be truer to reality than a composite picture subject to a vast number of exceptions and qualifications.

THE NATURE OF PRIESTHOOD

A *hiereus*, whether male or female, was an appointed public official who obtained office by birth, election, lot, or from sale (this last method became common during the Hellenistic period in Asia Minor and in islands off its coast: Dignas 2002). There were no ‘priests’ of all the gods of a city nor even of a deity in general; rather, one was always a *hiereus* or *hiereia* in a particular cult in a particular sanctuary (of Athena Polias or Athena Nike or Athena Parthenos, for instance), and one’s authority and

duties were restricted accordingly (Parker 2011: 53). The oldest priesthoods in Athens were hereditary and were held for life. These were the prerogative of aristocratic clans or descent groups (called *gen*e: sing. *genos*). For instance, the Eumolpidai provided the hierophant (chief 'priest') and the Kerykes the *dadouchos* (torch bearer) for the Eleusinian mysteries. From the Eteoboutadai came the hereditary *hiereia* of Athena Polias and the *hiereus* of Poseidon-Erechtheus. The *gen*e never lost their control over the old traditional cults, not surprisingly, since ancient priesthoods could confer tremendous prestige on the holder (see especially Xen. *Symp*. 8.40 on Kallias the *dadouchos*).

From the middle of the fifth century BCE, however, the *hiereus* or *hiereia* of newly established civic cults were chosen by lot or by election from all Athenian citizens and tenure was normally annual. The earliest known example is the *hiereia* of the cult of Athena Nike (established in the 440s or 420s), who 'was selected by lot from all Athenian women' (ML 44). The decree authorizing this, however, does not indicate how the sortition was to be conducted (from pre-selected candidates, for example?) or whether the tenure was to be for life or only for one year. In most cases, the *hiereus* or *hiereia* had no special religious training or knowledge to bring to their office. What expertise they had was acquired on the job. Yet individuals who held a lifetime priesthood might acquire a good deal of ritual and technical knowledge over the course of a career. A famous example is Lysimache, who, in the fifth-century BCE, was the *hiereia* of Athena Polias for sixty-four years (*IG* II^2 3453; Plin. *HN* 34.76).

But what exactly did a *hiereus* or *hiereia* need to know in order to discharge their duties? That question is not very easy to answer and the details will have varied from case to case. Defining what it meant to be a 'priest' or 'priestess' has been a major, and mostly futile, obsession of modern scholarship. In the most basic terms, the chief responsibility of the *hiereus* was to manage the *hiera*: the offerings, sacrifices, and the sanctuary itself and its property, all of which were *hiera* or 'sacred' (Mikalson 2004: 11). But even these tasks were not the exclusive duties and privileges of a *hiereus*. Some public sacrifices were assigned to magistrates, and any citizen could perform an animal sacrifice without being a 'priest', either in his own home or even (with some restrictions) in a public sanctuary. Though the authority to sacrifice is one function of being a *hiereus*, it is not the defining one. From the fact that any citizen

can sacrifice it is logical to deduce that the *hiereus* cannot be considered the ‘mediator’ (as is often claimed) between gods and men or between the gods and the polis. If there was a ‘mediator’ in Greek religion, then that role was performed by the *mantis*.

Yet even if the most *conspicuous* duty of a *hiereus* was to preside over a sacrifice of animal victims, he did not need to do any of the messy work that animal sacrifice entailed, since he was supported by various officials and attendants. A *mageiros* (or ‘butcher cook’) did the actual killing and cooking, while the distribution of the sacrificial meat was handled by a *kreonomos*. The *hiereus*, for his part, was expected to say the appropriate prayers and to undertake some ritual actions (such as placing the god’s portion of the sacrificed animal on the altar).

There were, to be sure, other activities apart from sacrifice that fell within the purview of the job description. These included managing the physical condition and finances of the sanctuary, making sure that the traditional rituals were performed at the right time in the right way, conducting rites of purification (in case of pollution) and issuing curses (at the direction of civic authorities), opening the temple in the morning, and overseeing the actions of individuals visiting the sanctuary. But, as with the act of killing the animal offered for sacrifice, it is very unclear to what extent the *hiereis* and *hiereiai* did these things themselves. In two passages of his *Laws* (759a and 953a), Plato seems to imply that officials called *neokoroi* (a type of ‘warden’) were a common feature of sanctuaries, although literary references to them are sparse. A detailed inscription from the Amphiareion at Oropos specifies that the *hiereus* must be present not less than ten days in each month and that in his absence the *neokoros* is to be in charge of the sanctuary (*LSCG* 69: dated between 386 and 377 BCE).

In an underappreciated passage of his *Politics* (1322b18–29), Aristotle reveals that many duties, as well as some sacrifices, might be the specific responsibility of various civic officials:

> Another kind of supervision is that concerning the gods; for example, *hiereis* and supervisors of matters concerned with the temples (such as the preservation of existing buildings and the restoration of those that are in disrepair) and with all of the other things that have been set aside for the gods. It happens that in some places there is only one supervisory office of this sort, for instance in small cities, but in others there are many offices that are separate from the priesthood (*hierosyne*); for example *hieropoioi* (performers of sacred rites) and *naophylakes* (temple-guardians) and *tamiai* (treasurers of sacred funds). Next to this is the supervision devoted to the management of all the public sacrifices that the law does not assign to the *hiereis*, but to the officials who derive their

> honour from the common hearth. These officials are sometimes called archons, sometimes kings, and sometimes *prytaneis* (presidents).

So one way to imagine a *hiereus* or *hiereia* would be as a type of ‘master of ceremonies’ in a public display of ritual performance, who (depending on the size and resources of the sanctuary) acted in concert with civic officials and was supported by a staff of variously skilled attendants.

Nonetheless, a famous story recorded by Thucydides (4.133.2–3) reveals that daily manual tasks, even in a large and wealthy sanctuary, could not necessarily be passed on to others:

> During the same summer [of 423 BCE] the temple of Hera near Argos was burnt down; Chrysis the *hiereia* had put a moveable lamp too near the wollen fillets and had then gone to sleep, so that they all caught fire and were in a blaze before she noticed. In her fear of the Argives she fled that very night to Phlius; and the Argives, in accordance with the established law, appointed another *hiereia* named Phaeinis. Chrysis had served for eight years of this war and half of the ninth when she went into exile.

We know that this Chrysis had been the *hiereia* of Hera at Argos for a total of fifty-six and a half years, since Thucydides (2.2.1) had used the forty-eighth year of her priesthood as one means of dating the first year of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE). Pausanias, a travel writer of the late second century CE, adds some intriguing details (2.17.7): ‘Chrysis went to Tegea and supplicated Athena Alea. Although so great a disaster had befallen them, the Argives did not take down the statue of Chrysis, and even to this day it stands in front of the burnt temple.’ It is noteworthy that Chrysis herself, and not some attendant or functionary, was living in the temple (or at least sleeping there), arranged lamps and fillets (made of highly flammable strips of wool), and was held personally responsible for the accident that ensued. She was important enough to have a statue erected of her (apparently in her lifetime) and for it to remain standing even after her disgrace, and for the officials of another famous temple in a different polis to give her permanent asylum. Here we have someone who, for more than half a century, held a very prestigious priesthood in a major sanctuary, yet was evidently responsible for fairly mundane tasks. Apart from their role in civic cults, women also acted as the *hiereiai* of private religious associations, and, for a fee, offered purification and initiation into esoteric cults. The Athenian orator Aeschines, according to his

archenemy Demosthenes (*De cor*. 259–60), as a young man had assisted his mother with the induction of initiates into such a private cult.

Unlicensed Religious Specialists

The mention of private cults brings us to the vexed topic of the role, function, and status of unlicensed religious specialists, the most common name for whom was *mantis*.

Even if, as Isokrates asserts (*Ad Nic*. 6), any citizen was thought competent to discharge the duties of being a *hiereus*, that was not true of being a *mantis*. Unlike the typical civic *hiereus*, a *mantis* was a purveyor of services that depended on technical knowledge, and, to a not negligible extent, on personal charisma (the ability to inspire confidence in oneself as someone possessing special skills, knowledge, and talents). We might describe *manteis* as 'migrant charismatic specialists' (Burkert 1992: 42), who travelled from city to city offering supernatural services for a fee to anyone who was willing and able to pay. As is so often the case in the study of Greek religion, however, one can find exceptions to the general rule. Some *manteis* settled in a particular city or served the same general on military campaigns for many years. At the sanctuary of Olympia two *manteis* (one from the family of the Iamidai and another from the Klytiadai) not only practised divination atop Zeus' altar, but were responsible for the care of the altar and for certain monthly sacrifices, which were duties of a kind that elsewhere normally belonged to *hiereis* (Paus. 5.13.11, 5.15.10; Weniger 1915).

In the Greek historians a *mantis* is principally an expert in the art of divination, which is not surprising given that divination played an essential role in Greek warfare. But their range of ritual expertise was far broader. The archetypal seer was the legendary Melampos, who acted as diviner, healer, and purifier. In Aischylos' *Eumenides* (458 BCE) the Pythia refers (lines 61–3) to Apollo as 'healer-seer (*iatromantis*), interpreter of omens (*teratoskopos*), and purifier (*kathartes*)', mirroring the services that mortal *manteis* could provide. Whether they were additionally the purveyors of *mageia* ('sorcery') will be discussed in the section 'Names, Attitudes, and Specialization'.

In terms of divination the *mantis* had to be ready to interpret all sorts of signs sent by the gods in the form of natural phenomena or the behaviour of animals (especially birds) or dreams. While on military campaign two types of sacrificial divination were of particular importance: one was the camp-ground sacrifice (called *hiera)*, and the other was the battle-line sacrifice (called *sphagia*). Performing *hiera* entailed examining the victim's entrails, especially the liver (the 'victim' was usually a sheep), whereas performing *sphagia* consisted of slitting the victim's throat (a goat or ram) while observing its movements and the flow of blood. Doubtless individuals from various social strata found themselves thus employed, but, at the high end of the pay scale, a *mantis*' authority and credibility in the eyes of his clients often depended on him belonging to an established clan (*genos*) of seers (the four most distinguished were the Melampodidai, Iamidai, Klytiadai, and Telliadai). This was because mantic knowledge was inherently different from other types of technical know-how, such as medical knowledge. Like medical knowledge it was technical and teachable; but, in addition, it was imagined as being an innate and inheritable gift. Since manuals of divination did not appear until the fourth century, and even then must have been schematic at best, it seems that a *mantis* might represent himself as having inherited an innate capacity for divination. It has been argued that these clan groupings were merely guilds in which members did not actually claim to be biologically descended from a common eponymous ancestor (Johnston 2008: 110–11). Herodotos, at least, did not view these kinship ties as obviously fictive. As he unambiguously reveals in a famous story about the seer Euenios and his alleged son Deiphonos (9.92–5), employment might depend on convincing others that the *mantis* was what he claimed to be, literally the blood descendant of another *mantis* (Flower 2008a).

Female *manteis* are best known as the transmitters of divine communication at fixed oracular sites such as Delphi and Dodona. The Pythia at Delphi, who served as the mouthpiece for Apollo, is variously called *mantis*, *prophetis*, and *promantis*. Nothing in the study of Greek religion is more controversial than the question of the expertise of the inspired female *mantis*. Modern scholars are sharply divided whether any of them, and especially the Pythia, had the ability to prophesy in hexameter verse without male assistance. That debate is too large to enter into here (for diametrically opposed views, see Bowden 2005 and Flower

2008b: 211–39). However that may be, it would be erroneous to suppose that female *manteis* only played a passive role in divinatory rituals. An iconographically unique fifth-century BCE grave stele from Mantinea depicts a woman holding a liver in her left hand (Möbius 1967). She probably did not go on campaign with armies, but battle was not the only venue in which a *mantis* might perform sacrificial divination. We can easily imagine a context in which a woman might interpret the entrails of a sacrificial animal within a private domestic setting—for instance, on the occasion of her client leaving home for war or travel or seeking to know whether a particular business venture or marriage was advantageous. It is also possible that she served the polis of Mantinea in a public capacity, since a *mantis* could be officially employed by the state.

There is one other group of specialists with whom *manteis* shared an expertise in matters relating to the practice of divination. These individuals were called *chresmologoi*, and they were the professional collectors, chanters, and interpreters of oracles. For a fee, *chresmologoi* might offer to interpret oracles from their own personal collections (often attributed to legendary poets such as Musaios: Hdt. 7.6), often to private clients. Or, as at Athens in 481 (Hdt. 7.142–3), they could presume, in a public assembly, to explain the meaning of oracles that had come from Delphi.

A whole range of sources gives the impression that *manteis* and *chresmologoi* were perceived as practising related, but not identical, skill sets, at least in regard to public divination (contrasting views in Eidinow 2007: 26–30 and Dillery 2005: 169–70). When Thucydides says (8.1.1) that the Athenians in 413 BCE 'were angry both with the *chresmologoi* and the *manteis*, and with as many others who, through the practice of divination, in some way at that time had caused them to hope that they would capture Sicily', he seems to be referring to two different categories of specialists. Yet there was nothing to prohibit an individual from mastering the expertise of both and calling himself by both designations, apart from the desire to specialize as a personal preference or marketing strategy.

NAMES, ATTITUDES, AND SPECIALIZATION

This brings us to a highly controversial and important problem, one that simultaneously forces us to evaluate both our own conceptual biases and those of our sources. Our elite literary sources generally treat the *mantis* as a figure worthy of respect, someone who performs a useful and indeed indispensable social function (even if individual *manteis* are sometimes accused of fraud, especially in Greek tragedy). By contrast, other names for freelance ritual experts are invariably derogatory. These include *magos* (usually, but misleadingly, translated as magician), *goes*/*goetis* (sorcerer/sorceress) and *agyrtes* (begging priest). The *goes* may originally have been a specialist in raising the souls of the dead (Johnston 1999; contra Dickie 2001: 13–14), but, like *magos*, the word mostly denotes an all-purpose 'sorcerer'. There is also the *pharmakeus* (male) and *pharmakis* (female), a provider of potions and spells. Only one text from the Classical period uses *magos* in a positive sense when referring to Greek specialists. And matters are made even more complex by the fact that only one source (Plato) explicitly attributes the ritual expertise of the *magos* to the *mantis*.

We are faced with two interrelated but distinct questions. First, was *mantis* a catch-all term for a freelance religious specialist who could offer clients 'a grab-bag of supernatural skills and services' (Eidinow 2007: 27)? In other words, did anyone ever admit to being a *goes* or a *magos*, or was 'the profession entered in the passport' always *mantis* (Parker 2005: 134). Secondly, did these self-styled '*manteis*' usually offer a smorgasbord of different supernatural services, or did they tend to specialize in a particular skill? These questions are frustratingly difficult to answer and they are implicated in a larger debate over whether it is ever useful to think in terms of 'ideal types' of religious specialists, in the manner pioneered by Max Weber.

On the surface, it may seem unlikely that no one, not even in private consultation, ever advertised himself or herself as a *goes*, *pharmakeus*, or *magos*. The Derveni Papyrus, dating to the late fourth century BCE, refers to the *magoi* and initiates in what seems to be an Orphic or Dionysiac cult. Some scholars consider these *magoi* to be Persian priests (since that was

the original meaning of the word). But a very convincing case has been made that these particular *magoi* are the Greek leaders of a private religious group (see Betegh 2004: 78–83; and columns 5–6 of the papyrus). If that interpretation is correct, then we have evidence that, in private settings, *magos* could be a positive self-ascription.

Yet one notorious case does seem to suggest that names were fluid, even if *mantis* generally was the self-description of choice. Theoris of Lemnos, who was active in mid-fourth century Athens BCE, is called a *pharmakis* in a Demosthenic speech (*Aristogeit*. 79–80), a *hiereia* by Plutarch (*Dem.*14.4), and apparently a *mantis* by Philochoros (*FGrH* 328 F 60), the Athenian polymath of the late fourth/early third century BCE. The second-century CE lexicographer, Harpokration, cites Philochoros as follows: 'Theoris: Demosthenes in his speech against *Aristogeiton*, if it is genuine. Theoris was a *mantis*, and she was condemned on a charge of impiety and put to death, as also Philochoros writes in book 6.' It is striking that Philochoros, who was himself a *mantis* practising divination, and who wrote a book called *On Divination*, was willing to share that designation with Theoris, who was publically attacked for her allegedly harmful activities as a *pharmakis*. This would strongly suggest that, whatever her precise expertise, Theoris advertised herself as a *mantis* (and, perhaps concurrently, a *hiereia*, as in Plutarch). There *may* indeed have been a strong legal incentive for calling oneself a *mantis*, since in cities other than Athens, if we can trust an unverifiable statement in Plato's *Meno* (80a–b), anyone acting as a *goes* was subject to arrest.

What makes any reconstruction of freelance ritual expertise so problematic is the fact that, by the late fifth century BCE, those who attempted to heal with purifications and incantations were harshly attacked by the practitioners of rational medicine. The author of the Hippokratic treatise *On The Sacred Disease* asserts (2), 'Those who first attributed a sacred character to this disease [epilepsy] seem to me to be like the *magoi* (sorcerers), *kathartai* (purifiers), *agyrtai* (beggar-priests), and *alazones* (charlatans) of our own day, men who pretend to be exceedingly pious and to have superior knowledge.' The author claims that, because they had no treatment, 'they deemed this illness to be sacred in order that their ignorance might not be manifest'. Although the practitioners of Hippokratic medicine were also in competition with *manteis* in the treatment of disease, the latter, very strikingly, are missing

from his list of quacks. Plato, writing a generation later, did not spare them. In a famous passage, he ridicules ritual specialists who wander from city to city offering supernatural services for a fee (*Resp*. 364b–e):

> *Agyrtai* and *manteis* frequent the doors of the rich and persuade them that they have obtained from the gods, through sacrifices and incantations, the power to heal them through pleasant rituals if some wrong was committed either by them or their ancestors. And if someone wishes to bring ruin upon an enemy, with small expense he will be able to harm the just and unjust alike, since they have the ability through certain enchantments and binding spells to persuade the gods, as they say, to serve them . . . . And they produce a noisy din of books of Musaios and Orpheus, the offspring of the Moon and of the Muses, as they claim, and using these books in their sacrifices, they manage to persuade not only private individuals but even whole cities that there really are releases and purifications from unjust deeds by means of sacrifices and pleasant sport, some for the living and others for the dead. These releases and purifications they call initiations (*teletai*), which deliver us from evils there [in the underworld], while terrible things await those who have not sacrificed.

Plato is here combining three different ritual activities that could be performed independently: causing harm through spells, expiation of crime through purification, and initiation into private mystery cults. He is not necessarily saying, however, that one and the same person could or did offer all of these services—only that whoever provided any one of them was called a *mantis* (or an *agyrtes*). His purpose is obviously to disparage *manteis* in general, no matter their specific expertise, by associating them with the peddling of what *he* considered to be socially disreputable services. He takes an even more strident stand in the *Laws* (*c*.347 BCE), proposing life imprisonment as the punishment for those *manteis* ‘who claim to raise the souls (*psychagogein*) of the dead and who promise to persuade the gods by bewitching (*goeteuontes*) them through sacrifices, prayers, and incantations’ (909a8–b6). Later, he refers to the fear aroused in those who see wax figurines (what we would call ‘voodoo dolls’) at doorways, or at points where three roads meet, or on the tombs of their ancestors (933a–b), and the implication is that these have been made by *manteis*.

In Plato’s view those *manteis* who attempt to bind or coerce the gods are guilty of impiety (*Leg*. 908–9). He even specifies the death penalty as the punishment for any doctor who attempts harm through drugs or for any *mantis* or *teratoskopos* (‘interpreter of portents’) who attempts to harm someone through ‘binding curses, or incantations, or spells’ (*Leg*. 933d–e). Now, Plato’s testimony that the purveyors of curse tablets and of related

supernatural weapons called themselves *manteis* cannot be accepted uncritically as a reflection of social reality, because it was part of his utopian programme to outlaw all private, unlicensed, and unsanctioned religious rituals, as well as their providers, from his ideal polis. Since *mantis* was the term of highest social value, it served his purposes very well to use *manteis* and *teratoskopoi* as umbrella terms to cover the whole range of freelance specialists. Yet, would Plato have made these claims in the *Republic* and *Laws* if none of his readers had *ever* met a purveyor of wax dolls, curse tablets, in-house purifications from blood guilt, and potions of various sorts, who went by the self-styled title of *mantis*? Despite qualms about his motives, we should probably accept his evidence that the job description in the passport was usually, if perhaps not invariably, *mantis*.

The contrast between Plato's description of the activities of *manteis* and that in other sources should not lead us to posit a distinction between 'the professional class of seer' who were attached to temples (such as the Pythia at Delphi) or to armies and the 'itinerate *mantis* who wandered from city to city offering their services for hire' (as does Collins 2008a: 50–1). Such a distinction cannot hold, since the term 'professional' is anachronistic in a world where certification did not exist and, apart from the *manteis* at oracular sanctuaries, all were, or could be, itinerate. Some *manteis* struck up long-term relationships with particular generals. Nikias is said to have relied upon Stilbides (Plut. *Nic*. 23.5) and Aristander of Telmessos served both Philip II and then Alexander the Great. Some even established their families in a particular city, such as Teisamenos of Elis, who, in 479 BCE, demanded Spartan citizenship as payment for his services and whose descendants served as *manteis* at Sparta for generations to come (Hdt. 9.33–5; Flower 2008a). But, in general, the occupation of military *mantis* was characterized by serving the highest bidder, whoever that might be.

A particularly noteworthy example of the itinerate *mantis* who sold his services is Silanos from Ambrakia. He was the personal *mantis* to the Persian prince, Cyrus the Younger, during Cyrus' unsuccessful attempt to overthrow his brother, King Artaxerxes II, in 401 BCE, with the aid of an army of some ten thousand Greek mercenaries. Xenophon, in the *Anabasis*, gives a vivid account of his own less than satisfactory dealings

with Silanos. We first encounter this *mantis* in the context of the king's failure to offer battle (1.7.18):

> Cyrus summoned the Ambrakiot *mantis* Silanos and gave him three thousand gold darics, because when sacrificing eleven days previously, he had said to him that the king would not fight within ten days. Cyrus had said, "Then he shall not fight at all if he shall not fight within these days. If you should prove to be speaking the truth, I promise you ten talents." At that time he gave him the gold, since the ten days had passed.

Silanos' prediction that ten days would pass without a battle is not the kind of information that was normally obtained by inspecting the liver and entrails of a sacrificial victim, since usually the signs were either favourable or unfavourable for a particular course of action, or, more rarely, revealed impending danger. Xenophon has temporally displaced this incident in order to create dramatic suspense before the Battle of Cunaxa, but it is easy to infer that the original context was the campground sacrifice. If so, then Silanos need have said no more than that the sacrifices were propitious for marching out, or, more boldly, that the king would not fight on that particular day. Obviously, he took a gamble of sorts, whether consciously or not, and made a much more elaborate prediction than was expected from this particular ritual. This gamble paid off extremely handsomely, since ten talents was a huge fortune. Cyrus, for his part, wrongly inferred that the king was not planning to fight at all, and that inference was one of the contributing factors that caused him to be caught completely unprepared on the day of the battle.

When, during the subsequent retreat of the Greek mercenaries, Xenophon conceived the idea of founding a colony on the coast of the Black Sea, he decided to make a preliminary divinatory sacrifice before mentioning this idea to the soldiers (5.6.15–19, 28–30). He apparently did not feel competent to do this himself, and so he summoned Silanos to conduct the sacrifice for him. Silanos, however, did not want Xenophon's plan to succeed, because he desperately wanted to get back to Greece with the money that he had been given by Cyrus. So he leaked Xenophon's scheme to the army, and that got Xenophon into considerable trouble.

If *manteis* were as unscrupulous as Plato claims, why did Silanos not simply tell Xenophon that the omens were unfavourable for discussing a colony? The reason is provided by Xenophon himself when he defends his actions before the army (5.6.29):

> Silanos the *mantis* responded with respect to the most important point that the omens from sacrifice were favourable. For he knew that I too was not inexperienced on account of my always being present at sacrifices. But he said that treachery and a plot against me appeared in the omens, since he indeed knew that he himself was plotting to slander me to you.

Since no two livers look exactly alike, there was a subjective element in the *mantis*' evaluation of a particular liver's size, shape, texture, and colour, as well as of its 'gate' and portal vein (Collins 2008b). There were some features that were always bad (for instance, if a liver was missing a caudate lobe) and others that were probably evaluated on a sliding scale. Yet Xenophon apparently knew how to read livers and entrails and therefore Silanos could not claim that the signs were negative. Perhaps Silanos consciously invented the plot against Xenophon in order to discourage him; but, even so, it was not a fabricated interpretation in the sense that Silanos accurately predicted his own actions in slandering Xenophon.

Silanos' authority, interestingly enough, only extended to divination. When he attempted to oppose a vote to punish runaways (5.6.34), the assembled troops shouted him down and threatened him with punishment if he tried to run away himself. Nonetheless, we later learn that a different *mantis* is conducting the sacrifice for the generals, because 'Silanos the *mantis* had already run away, having hired a boat out of Herakleia' (6.4.13). Throughout the *Anabasis* Silanos is depicted as being simultaneously a highly unscrupulous self-serving character and an extremely competent *mantis*. Even so, if we are to believe Plato, one thing, surprisingly, is missing from this very full account. There is never any suggestion that Silanos employed any sort of supernatural weapon in order to bind the tongue of his eloquent opponent when Xenophon denounced him before the army. Is that because the historical Silanos did not have the appropriate expertise? Or is it because Xenophon, as the author of the *Anabasis*, did not deign to include references to what he probably considered 'bad religion' in his narrative? The gap between Plato's philosophical treatment of *manteis* and Xenophon's literary–historical treatment is difficult, but perhaps not impossible, to bridge.

There are two passages from Xenophon that are suggestive. According to Plato, purification from wrongdoing was one of the services offered by itinerant *manteis*. In the *Anabasis*, we find the *manteis* recommending a purification of the army after a period of internal dissension during which

some foreign ambassadors had been impiously slain (5.7.35). Hippokrates says that *magoi* asserted the ability to control the weather (*Morb. sacr.* 1.29–30). And Empedokles of Akragas (*c.*492–432 BCE) apparently claims in his poem *Purifications* (F 111) that he can teach how 'to stay the force of unwearied winds' and, more spectacularly, 'to bring from Hades the life force of a dead man'. Xenophon relates (*An.* 4.5.3–4) that when a harsh north wind was blasting the soldiers in their faces as they were marching through Armenia, 'one of the *manteis* told them to make a slaughter sacrifice (*sphagiasasthai*) to the wind, and the sacrifice was made, and it seemed completely clear to everyone that the harshness of the wind abated'. It seems obvious that freelance ritual experts, no matter what they called themselves, were prepared to offer a wide range of services. Some undoubtedly specialized in particular activities and advertised themselves accordingly. *A mantis* who sought employment with armies would have emphasized his ability to 'win' battles (Flower 2008b: 94–6); but, as depicted in the *Anabasis*, he might also have been called upon to act as a *kathartes* (purifier) or to offer various types of propitiatory sacrifices (to abate bad weather, for instance). Other *manteis* might have marketed themselves as particularly adept at healing sickness or cursing enemies. It was up to potential clients to locate the specialist who could offer the range of services for which they were looking.

CONCLUSION

Due to the scattered and partial nature of the evidence, it is very difficult to talk of change over time, whether in terms of evolution of priestly and mantic functions from simple to more complex forms, or of devolution from a number of different specialists (with separate designations) to all-purpose providers. The situation in Sparta, where the two kings also held important priesthoods (Hdt. 6.56), has the look of a survival from a much earlier time (Dark Age Greece) when priestly and royal power was vested in the same individual. Later, during the Archaic Age, such power was divested into various elected magistrates (such as the nine archons at Athens). But all such schematic reconstructions must remain hypothetical,

since our knowledge of early Greek society is so thin. It is tempting, but methodologically flawed, to employ evidence from imperial era writers, such as Diogenes Laertius (third century CE) or Plutarch (first century CE), to reconstruct the position of supernatural specialists (such as Epimenides or Empedokles) in Archaic and early Classical Greece. The problem is that the legends about these early figures were elaborated and expanded over time. It should give us considerable pause that Aristotle (*Ath. Pol*. 1) and Plato (*Leg*. 642d) place the purificatory sacrifices of Epimenides at Athens a hundred years apart. Nonetheless, a few observations can be advanced about developments in the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

The purchase of priesthoods became increasingly common in Asia Minor during the Hellenistic period, but it would be a large undertaking to compare and contrast Classical and Hellenistic evidence for the role, expertise, and functions of the *hiereus* and *hiereia*. On the other hand, *chresmologoi* largely disappear from the historical record after 413 BCE. Although they appear fairly frequently in fifth-century sources, by the early fourth century it is hard to find a trace of them. Xenophon makes numerous references to *manteis*, but only once mentions a *chresmologos* (Diopeithes, probably an Athenian, who became involved in the struggle over the royal succession at Sparta in 400 BCE: *Hell*. 3.3.3). 'Local' Boiotian *chresmologoi* are said to have consulted with the Theban general Epaminondas before the Battle of Leuktra in 371 BCE (Diod. Sic. 15.54.2, probably drawing on the fourth-century historian Ephoros of Kyme). Had *chresmologoi* as a group discredited themselves during the Peloponnesian War because their predictions had mostly proved false, or had the greater circulation of written texts made their particular expertise obsolete?

The *mantis*, however, never seems to have lost her or his authority, even as new forms of political power, as well as of divination (such as astrology), developed in the Hellenistic Age. Curse tablets begin in the sixth century BCE and continue to the eighth century CE (in Attica they first appear in the mid-fifth century BCE and are most prevalent in the fourth, just when Plato was writing). Although the tablets themselves do not indicate whether they are the handiwork of a specialist provider, it is a fair assumption that self-styled *manteis*/*magoi* at all times enjoyed a brisk business in making and activating them. It is certain that *manteis* skilled in the art of divination still found plentiful employment throughout the

Hellenistic period, since kings and commoners alike relied on their advice and guidance as much as they had in earlier periods of Greek history.

Suggested Reading

Henrichs (2008) lists thirty different attempts at defining a Greek 'priest' and shows that they are all problematic in one way or another, whereas Chaniotis (2008) surveys a great deal of inscriptional evidence for ritual expertise across time and place. A detailed exposition of the evidence for cult personnel is in *ThesCRA* 5.1–65. Connelly 2007 is devoted to Greek priestesses. For priests specifically at Athens, see Clinton 1974, Garland 1984, 1990, Lambert 2010, and Horster and Klöckne 2011. *Manteis* and *Chresmologoi* are treated in detail by Pritchett 1979: 47–90, Dillery 2005, and Flower 2008b**;** note also Bowden 2003 and Bremmer 1993, 1996. Kett 1966 is a prosopography of named *manteis*. For pre-battle sacrifices, see especially Jameson 1991 and Parker 2000. Magic and divination are usefully surveyed by Collins 2008a and Johnston 2008, respectively. Dickie 2001 is a very thorough exploration of 'magicians' in both Greece and Rome. For the role of oracles and cursing in Greek society one should consult Eidinow 2007. For Theoris, see Eidinow 2010, and for divination in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Parker 2004 and Flower 2012. Judicious accounts of all issues relating to religious expertise are in Parker 2005, 2011.

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CHAPTER 21

NEW GODS

RALPH ANDERSON

INTRODUCTION

THE apparent ease and frequency with which the Greek poleis added new deities to their pantheons is an intriguing feature of Greek religion. New deities could be imported from outside the city or a familiar god might be offered cult under a new title. The introduction of new gods raises important questions for our understanding of both Greek religion and its relationship with other areas of Greek culture, practice, and experience: what it was the Greeks sought from their gods; how religious innovation was authorized; the relationship between politics and religion; and how religion reflected community history and identity as they changed over time.

The readiness of the Greeks to adopt new gods may also challenge modern, Western conceptions of the nature of religion. From a perspective informed by Christianity, in which a long-lasting and exclusive commitment to a single deity is central, the Greeks' willingness to adopt new deities appears incongruous. At the very least, one might expect some indications of spiritual dissatisfaction prior to the adoption of a new god.

However, such expectations would misconstrue not only what happens when a new god is welcomed into a community, but also the nature of Greek religion more generally.

How to Introduce a New God: Pragmatism and Authority

The acquisition of a new god by a community in no way represented a religious conversion, or a spiritual or theological revolution. As far as the Greeks were concerned, they shared the world with a vast range of divine and semi-divine beings. Any or all of them could impinge on human life, and all, in principle, deserved cult: there was no necessary incompatibility between the community's familiar gods and any potential newcomer. The introduction of a new god amounted to a decision by the community to establish a cult to one more deity in addition to the extensive pantheon already receiving worship (see, in this volume, Deacy, Chapter 24, and Ekroth, Chapter 26).

This decision rested mainly on pragmatic grounds that reflected what the Greeks hoped for from their gods. A central consideration was the value of cultivating a relationship with a deity that had shown itself willing to help the city or which might help in future. Just as with new alliances with other cities, potential benefits, costs, and obligations had to be carefully examined. A new god would require a cult in his or her honour and a sanctuary. A simple sanctuary might entail only the purchase or donation and dedication of a small plot of land and the erection of an altar. However, this was a minimum, and further features, such as a temple and cult statue, and possibly ancillary buildings, such as dining rooms, were desirable if not absolutely necessary.

A large cult would need an endowment, usually in the form of more land, to cover the cost of sacrifices, maintenance, and sanctuary officials (Garland 1992: 21). Costs could accumulate rapidly and would have to be borne either by the sponsor(s) of the new cult or by the polis itself, that is, by the community collectively. Either way, the city would need to be

convinced that the new god would earn his or her keep. Herodotos 5.80–1 offers an illuminating, if negative, example, albeit one relating to hero-cult: when Thebes asked Aigina for military assistance against Athens, the Aiginetans sent them their heroes, the sons of Aiakos. When they proved useless, the Thebans returned them and asked for men instead (Garland 1992: 1).

Such pragmatism is entirely consistent with the quasi-contractual aspect of Greek religion, in which a trade in favours, based around ideas of gift exchange and *charis*, loomed large (Parker 1998). However, any community had only finite resources—both material and cognitive—to devote to cult and this meant that new gods could not be adopted lightly. A new god would compete with existing cults for offerings and attention, and this could diminish the honours paid to established deities. Vested interests, such as powerful families that held prestigious priesthoods of other gods, would need to be won over (Garland 1992: 19–20). Moreover, the impact of the new cult on relations with other human communities needed consideration. The sharing of cults was a common element in the construction of alliances between cities. The decision to adopt a new god was, therefore, a complex and multifaceted one, but pragmatic rather than theological or doctrinal concerns predominated.

In Greece, authority in religious matters was highly dispersed, with each polis the master of its own religious life. For a complex decision that could potentially affect the fortunes of the whole community, the only appropriate venues were those presented by the polis' political systems (Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a). In democratic Athens, from 460 BCE onwards, the council and the assembly authorized the introduction of new cults—the decision belonged to the Athenian people (Garland 1992: 19; Parker 1996: 124, 129–31, 2005b: 61–2). Priests had relatively little formal influence on the process and no general religious power: if they could speak with authority in the assembly at all, it was only on matters pertaining to their own sanctuaries. Seers and oracle-interpreters, by contrast, could and did contribute, but only as expert advisers, able to guide the *demos*, not command it (Garland 1990; Sourvinou-Inwood 2000b: 38; Parker 2005a: 91–5; and, in this volume, Flower, Chapter 20). Evidence is scarcer for Sparta, but the close association of the kings with religious matters suggests that religious innovation was regulated by the normal sources of authority in the polis there, too (Hdt. 6.56; on Spartan religion, see Parker

1989 and Richer 2010). Indeed, this appears to have been the general rule in poleis (Parker 2005b: 61).

Two important qualifications must be noted. First, poleis did not operate in isolation. Panhellenic sources of religious authority existed in the form of major oracles such as Delphi and Dodona, which were routinely consulted by poleis considering cultic innovations (see, in this volume, Iles Johnston, Chapter 32). The initiative rested with a polis to consult the oracle, framing the question and acting on the response as it thought best. Direct instructions from the oracle would usually be followed, but often the details were left to the discretion of the enquiring polis. Only rarely did the oracles instigate a new cult unasked (Parker 1985; Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a: 20–1).

Second, while a polis claimed the right to regulate religion within its territory, enforcement was another matter, especially in large poleis such as Athens. In general, poleis lacked extensive state means of enforcement: the onus was on individual citizens to police their peers, albeit using the institutions of the city to do so (Parker 2005b: 63–8). However, it is not obvious that poleis attempted, even in this limited way, to regulate the ability of citizens (including women) to establish new sanctuaries on private land to gods already acknowledged by the community. Inscriptions from the shrine established around 400 BCE by one Xenokratia at Phaleron in Attica to the local river god, Kephisos, give no sign that permission was either sought or required (Garland 1992: 20; Purvis 2003: 14–30). Earlier in the century, Themistokles had established a shrine to Artemis under the novel title Aristoboule (‘the best adviser’), in gratitude for his own inspired strategies during the Second Persian War. Themistokles’ self-congratulation offended many, but the foundation of the cult was not in itself impious (Garland 1992: 73–8). Woe betide, however, the citizen who introduced an altogether unfamiliar deity without permission. This could be regarded as impiety, especially in troubled times, and dealt with severely, as in the case of Sokrates (Garland 1992: 136–51; Parker 2005b: 65–8; Eidinow 2010). Such instances may have been rare, and, in the case of Sokrates, political factors almost certainly lay behind the religious charges, but the use of the institutional mechanisms of the polis—its citizen jury-courts—again asserts the primacy of the polis in deciding which gods would receive cult within its territory.

The primacy of the polis also dictated which gods would be regarded as foreign or new: not only those of *barbaroi*, non-Greeks, but also those of all other Greeks. Pan and Asklepios, from Arkadia and Epidauros respectively, were just as much 'foreign gods' (*xenikoi theoi*) in fifth-century Athens as Thracian Bendis, and, like Bendis, needed formal introduction. Even common, Panhellenic deities, such as Zeus or Athena, could be 'foreign' if they were introduced into a city in new form or under a new cult title. Thus, Zeus Kenaios of Euboia, Poseidon Kalaureiates of Kalaureia, and Athena Itonia of Thessaly and Boiotia were all newcomers to Athens in the Archaic period, even though Zeus, Athena, and Poseidon were already well known there (Parker 1996: 157–8). As Sourvinou-Inwood (2000a: 18) noted, each polis determined not only which deities were particularly important to it and which aspect of each deity it would emphasize, but also 'the precise articulation of the cult . . . its particular modalities' (see further, in this volume, Vlassopoulos, Chapter 18). Local differences in the representation of different gods and the configuration of relations between them mattered, and these differences were governed by the polis.

WHY BRING IN A GOD? PAN IN ATHENS

We know little about the people who advocated cults of new gods and championed them through the city's institutional processes. Individuals are rarely recorded, though groups are more often named. Even when individuals are named, the sources show little interest in their character. There is little suggestion that individual advocates of new gods were particularly holy or pious, even when they had received an epiphany of the god whose cult they proposed (Garland 1992: 18). Where the debate is visible to us, the focus is on the credibility of the claims made for the benefits the god had brought or might bring. For instance, early in the fifth century, the Athenians established a shrine of Pan beneath their acropolis and instituted an annual festival featuring a torch race and sacrifices. Herodotos (6.105) explains that this was done following the Battle of Marathon in response to an epiphany of the god experienced by the runner,

Philippides, who had carried the Athenians' unsuccessful request for help to Sparta. The god met Philippides as he crossed Mount Parthenion in Arkadia and, addressing him by name, asked him why the Athenians paid him no attention despite his friendliness towards them and the help he had given them and would give them in the future. After the battle, Herodotos says, the Athenians accepted Philippides' story as true and established the cult.

The Athenian tradition which Herodotos reported based the cult on the individual testimony of Philippides, reinforced by the victory at Marathon, a victory so great and unexpected that divine assistance was a reasonable, perhaps even a necessary, inference. However, while Philippides' story provides an *aition* (origin story) for the cult, it is unlikely that Philippides established a new state cult single-handedly. A dedication made by Miltiades, the architect of the victory at Marathon, to 'goat-footed Pan of Arkadia, the one who fought against the Medes and with the Athenians' suggests that senior Athenian commanders were prepared to accept Philippides' story and support the cult (Garland 1992: 50–1, 59–60). Miltiades' motives are opaque but, as with Themistokles and his cult of Artemis Aristoboule, probably included a mixture of piety, gratitude, and a desire to commemorate both the victory itself and his own part in it. Garland also detects hints of possible Athenian economic connections with the communities of Arkadia in the early fifth century, in which Attic silver paid for Arkadian timber, vital for the Athenian fleet (1992: 60 n.7). More recently, however, Jim Roy (1999: 334–5) has cast doubt on the existence of this Arkadian timber-export trade. Nevertheless, some form of contact between Athenians and Arkadians before the Persian Wars is probable, though the current state of the evidence makes it impossible to prove any particular arrangement (I am grateful to Jim Roy for this point). Behind the introduction of Pan, then, may lie not only Philippides' experience in the mountains of Arkadia and the dramatic events of Marathon, but also the piety and ambitions of senior Athenian military and political leaders, and perhaps even some Athenian interests among the communities of Arkadia. The story of Philippides provides an appealing *aition*, but it potentially conceals as much as it reveals, masking both the identity of the individuals and factions involved and their motivations.

RELIGION AND POLITICS: ASKLEPIOS IN ATHENS

A similarly complex mix of motivations surrounds the arrival of Asklepios in Athens from Epidauros in 420/19 BCE. Since Asklepios specialized in healing and Athens had been afflicted by plague between 430 and 426 BCE, his arrival has been seen as uniquely free of political considerations and motivated purely by a desire for healing in a disease-ravaged city (e.g. Edelstein 1945: II.108–25; Garland 1992: 130–1; Parker 1996: 180). By contrast, other gods introduced into Athens in the fifth century are taken to reflect the military and political ambitions of the city. As noted in the section 'Why Bring in a God? Pan in Athens', Pan reflected the shock of Marathon. Likewise, the arrival of the Thracian goddess Bendis around 430 BCE reflected long-standing Athenian ambitions in the region and may have been intended to consolidate a military partnership with Thrace (Garland 1992: 112; Parker 1996: 170–5; Wickkiser 2008: 96; see Planeaux 2000 on the date of her arrival). Against this background, Asklepios' arrival is unique in being credited with no political dimension at all. Wickkiser, however, argues that Asklepios' arrival was connected not only with healing, but also with Athenian imperial ambitions in the north-east Peloponnese, particularly the area around Epidauros (2008: 90–105). The arrival of his cult, therefore, raises questions about the relationship of the religious and the political in Greece. Since we have unusually detailed and secure information about Asklepios' arrival, it is possible to explore these questions in depth.

Our principal source is the so-called Telemachus Monument, a double-sided relief-sculpted marble slab sitting atop a marble column on which was inscribed an account of the early years of the sanctuary. The inscription is fragmentary, but dates to *c*.400 BCE and no earlier than 412/11, so it is at least contemporary (Parker 1996: 177; Wickkiser 2008: 67). A second tradition gives the tragedian, Sophokles, as 'Dexion' ('Receiver'), a role in the initial reception of Asklepios. However, this rests on later sources and is hard to substantiate (Aleshire 1989: 9–11; Wickkiser 2008: 66–7). According to the inscription, Asklepios came up from Zea harbour in the Piraeus at the time of the Greater Eleusinian

mysteries, and lodged temporarily in the City Eleusinion. Telemachus transferred him by chariot (or wagon) from there to his new sanctuary on the south side of the Acropolis. There the problems begin. Asklepios may either have been accompanied by an attendant from Epidauros, or have arrived in the form of a sacred snake—either *diakonon* (attendant) or *drakonta* (snake) may be restored in the inscription (Parker 1996: 178–9; Wickkiser 2008: 67–72). Worse, there is even some possibility that Telemachus himself, usually assumed to have been an Athenian sponsor of the cult, may not have been Athenian at all, but rather an Epidaurian who moved to Athens to oversee the cult's installation there (Parker 1996: 178–9).

Despite the difficulties of the inscription, it is clear that the cult of Asklepios did not arrive in Athens without the involvement of powerful groups in the city. Temporary accommodation in the City Eleusinion suggests support from the priesthood of the Eleusinian cult, including the great *genos* of the Kerykes (even if, as the inscription says, the Kerykes contested some or all of the land the sanctuary was founded on the very next year; see Aleshire 1989: 8–9 and Garland 1992: 126; though Wickkiser 2008: 74–5 suggests the Kerykes may have disputed on Asklepios' behalf against a third party). Moreover, the festival of the Epidauria, which commemorated the arrival of Asklepios, was integrated into the programme of the Eleusinian mysteries, further suggesting close cooperation between the cults (Parker 1996: 179–80; Wickkiser 2008: 74–5). It has been suggested that Asklepios' cult in Athens began as a private cult, founded by an individual (Telemachus) but open to all (Aleshire 1989: 7–9, 72–85). However, it is unlikely that a lone individual, even with powerful friends, could gain such a prestigious location for his cult, or have its festival integrated into the programme of a major polis festival, without at least some measure of state approval (Parker 1996: 180–1; Wickkiser 2008: 71–2). Moreover, similarities between the architectural décor of the earliest building in Asklepios' sanctuary, the Ionic stoa, and the Erechtheion on the Acropolis above, suggest the Athenian state directly invested in the new cult (Melfi 2007: 327–31). Asklepios clearly had extensive help, both public and private, in establishing a home in Athens.

Athenian interest in Asklepios has conventionally been explained as a response to the trauma of the plague, which fed desire for a new and more

effective source of divine protection from disease. Asklepios was the best candidate, so it is claimed, but could not be imported from the Peloponnese until after the Peace of Nikias temporarily halted the Peloponnesian War in 421 (Aleshire 1989: 7; Garland 1992: 131–2; Parker 1996: 180). In this view, Asklepios was imported solely for his healing powers, and was installed at the first practical opportunity.

Wickkiser, however, argues that the introduction of Asklepios was closely implicated in Athenian foreign policy. Epidauros was strategically important for Athens because of its location on the Saronic Gulf coast in the north-eastern Peloponnese, and the Athenians attacked the city repeatedly during the 420s in an attempt to bring it under their control. Against this background, a political element to the introduction of Asklepios to Athens is not implausible. The Peace of Nikias prevented the Athenians from attacking Epidauros, which was allied to Sparta, but this did not mean that Athenian designs on the city ceased. Wickkiser detects signs of a short-lived attempt, led by a faction that included prominent members of the Kerykes, to build a consensual alliance between the two poleis. The export of Asklepios to Athens played a key role in establishing the alliance. She interprets the naming by the Athenians of one of their two festivals of Asklepios as the Epidauria as a deliberate effort to emphasize links between the cities. Inscriptional evidence also suggests that Epidaurian personnel participated in both the transfer of Asklepios to Athens and its later commemoration. She concludes that Athens did not ‘abduct’ Asklepios but ‘negotiated his importation’ and the Epidaurians, for their part, willingly cooperated (Wickkiser 2008: 97–8). However, if the Epidaurians hoped that this would secure them relief from Athenian aggression and potentially recruit Athens as an ally against their hostile neighbour, Argos, they were quickly disappointed. Athenian policy shifted as a more aggressive faction, opposed to the Peace of Nikias, prevailed. Athens allied itself with Argos, and Argos, not bound by the Peace, was free to attack Epidauros (Wickkiser 2008: 99–100). The alliance lasted long enough to establish Asklepios in Athens, but fell victim to Athenian factional politics, leaving Asklepios’ cult behind as the relic of a failed diplomatic venture.

Does this connection between Athenian strategic interest and the introduction of Asklepios provide us with the ‘real reason’ for the transfer of the cult? To pose the question more polemically, should we assume that

military and political objectives provide a more genuine explanation of cult transfers than what are, to us, less tangible religious factors? Nilsson, after all, regarded the adoption of new gods as a 'well-known expedient to unite an incorporated district with the ruling city' (1951: 33, cf. 45; Wickkiser 2008: 96; cf. Garland 1992: 115).

There is some merit in this view: cult transfers clearly do occur between cities that are linked by military, political, economic, or social ties. However, to view them as a 'mere disguise for socio-political power' (Kindt 2012: 89) is to underestimate the value of the new cult as a benefit to the receiving city in its own right. Athenian interest in a new god of healing and Athenian interest in a strategically important city are not incompatible, nor should the former be regarded as a mere reflection or token of the latter. We may not believe that Asklepios could heal anything, or that Pan could help in battle, but we should not automatically assume either that the Greeks shared our scepticism, or that they approached the adoption of new gods as a cynical cloak for political objectives (Kindt 2012: 89, cf. 56–7).

EXPLAINING CHANGE OVER TIME

The historical 'biography' of a city as it unfolded over time became embedded in its cultic life. The introduction of new cults can be linked with crises and upheavals. For example, the cults of Pan and Boreas and the heroic honours paid annually to the dead of Marathon embedded the shock, loss, and triumph of the Persian Wars in Athenian cult; earlier, Kleisthenes' reorganization of Attica had given new prominence to the Eponymous Heroes of his ten new tribes (Kearns 1985). New cults can reflect interstate and inter-regional connections and alliances: for example, the presence in Athens of Zeus Kenaios, Poseidon Kalaureiates, and Athena Itonia perhaps reflects earlier Athenian involvement in vanished Archaic amphictyonies stretching into Euboia, Thessaly, and Boiotia (Parker 1996: 28). Similarly, the presence of cults of Athena Mistress of Athens (*Athena Athenon medeousa*) in many cities of the Delian League manifests those cities' entanglement with imperial Athens

(Garland 1992: 106–9). As Kearns (this volume, Chapter 3) notes, change was normal—though not always uncontroversial—in Greek religion.

Some potential for understanding the traffic of gods and their cults within and between communities is offered by network theory (Collar 2009; Eidinow 2011). Collar, for example, employs it to explore the spread of the monotheistic cult of Theos Hypsistos through the Roman Empire. Significantly, network analysis offers explanations for the spread of religious innovations that do not depend upon the inherent merit of the innovations themselves.

Rather than asserting that migrating cults spread because they are 'superior' to others or that they answer some 'deficiency' in the religious systems of the communities which adopt them, network theory explains the spread of cults in terms of the structure of networks of communication between individuals and communities (or 'nodes'). Cults that spread do so because they originate in areas of the network that are conducive to accepting or disseminating change. Conversely, a perfectly good innovation may fail to spread simply because the configuration of the area of the network in which it arises hinders the acceptance or dissemination of a new idea or practice (Collar 2009: 153).

Thus, we might infer that Pan, Asklepios, Bendis, Sabazios, and the other deities that entered Athens during the fifth century did so not solely because of any particular need they may have fulfilled for the Athenians but because the nature, frequency, and strength of connections between Athens and their home regions favoured their transfer. There may have been many other deities, Greek or barbarian, that could have flourished in Athens, but which either never reached the city or failed to gain acceptance there because of the position at which they entered Athens' network of extraterritorial connections. Counterfactual claims like this are hard to substantiate. However, one may speculate that those deities, cults, and rituals that gained only marginal acceptance in the official discourse of the polis, such as the cult of Sabazios, Orphic ritual, and that loose constellation of practices now grouped under the heading of magic, are indications of such narrowly failed transfers. Analysis of the network routes by which these cults and practices entered Athens can potentially contribute to a broad explanation of their failure to gain full acceptance by the institutions of the polis (on this point, see Eidinow 2011).

The insight of network theory is to highlight the importance of social connectivity in determining the susceptibility of an individual or community to change. However, in stressing network connectivity as the determining factor in cultural change, network analysis can neglect cultural, cognitive, and psychological factors (Breiger 2004: 518–19). Eidinow (2011) attempts to bridge this gap by combining network theory with a study of social narratives about identity. The receptivity of a node is not, therefore, determined solely by its network position but also by factors such as culture and identity.

Another possible approach is offered by various strands of postcolonial analysis, particularly that associated with the work of Homi Bhabha, which emphasizes the ambiguity and instability of identity in the colonial encounter. Bhabha has been criticized for underplaying the violence and brutality of the colonial enterprise (Azim 2001: 239), but his presentation of cultural interaction as a two-way process of mutual modification and his emphasis on the production of novel hybrid or creole forms in the interstices created by colonial contact suggest a useful line of enquiry into the traffic in new gods in the ancient Mediterranean. Religion is an area in which the impact of neighbouring cultures on the Greek world has long been acknowledged (e.g. Burkert 1992; Noegel 2007; Morris 2012: 397). The spread of the cult of Meter to Greece in the late seventh and sixth centuries is one example that illustrates the process of hybridization well.

Meter (‘Mother’) originated in Anatolia, where she was known in Phrygian inscriptions as *Matar* or *Matar kubileya* (‘the Mother of the Mountain’), from which her alternative Greek name, Kybele, derives. Phrygian reliefs depict her in the form of a robed, standing woman framed by the walls and gable-end of a building. Greek representations from Miletos in the second quarter of the sixth century likewise present Meter as a standing figure framed by a *naiskos*. However, by the middle of the century, the Ionian Greeks began to depict her as seated within her *naiskos*, often holding a lion in her lap, probably because the enthroned posture better captured for Greek viewers the power of the goddess (Roller 1999: 125–32).

Meter’s Phrygian iconography was thus adapted by Greek sculptors to conform to Greek notions of divinity, and it was this image that spread to the rest of the Greek world, including Magna Graecia. Ironically, it was only as her cult was adopted by Greeks that Meter acquired her

characteristic attribute, the *tympanon* or tambourine, in both visual and literary representations. Although the instrument originated in the Near East, it is not attested in Phrygia and was not part of Phrygian Matar's cult. The Greeks may have added it because they associated it with wild, emotionally arousing music and ecstatic dancing, hallmarks, for them, of Meter's cult. However, there is no evidence for such emotionalism in Phrygian Matar's cult, and this also may be a Greek innovation, inspired by Greek perceptions of the exotic East (Roller 1999: 136–7). When Meter reached her new homes in Greece, she became part of pantheons radically different from her original setting, which further modified her persona and meaning for her worshippers (Parker 1996: 189; Roller 1999: 2, 119). The Meter who settled in mainland Greece and the western colonies was not, therefore, a transparently transplanted element of Phrygian religion, but a re-imagined, hybrid form, neither fully Greek nor fully Phrygian, that blended together both Greek and Anatolian elements (Roller 1999: 121–2).

The scope for hybrid forms to emerge from cross-cultural contact is obvious. Less obvious is the degree to which gods might be re-imagined as they travelled within the Greek world. Dougherty and Kurke (2003: 6) argue that, because of the internal variegation and plurality of Greek culture, the models of cultural interaction, hybridization, and reinvention that postcolonial theory offers can be applied to interactions between Greeks and Greeks as well as between Greeks and non-Greeks. (On this principle, see also Antonaccio 2003: 58–61, and, ultimately, Bhabha 1993: 299–300.) Thus, we might regard, for example, Pan in Athens as a re-imagined hybrid, rather than a simple recreation of an Arkadian deity. After all, the use of caves in his worship and his close association with the nymphs were features of his Athenian, not his Arkadian, cult (Jost 1985: 459–60; Parker 1996: 164–5).

NEW GODS FOR NEW EMPIRES: SARAPIS IN HELLENISTIC EGYPT

The major cities of the Hellenistic kingdoms, such as Alexandria, presented a vast array of deities and religious practices (Potter 2003: 407–8; Mikalson 2007: 208), which can illustrate the use of these two theories. The religious life of the period is highly diverse, to the extent that the notion of a uniform 'Hellenistic religion' is untenable. Conservatism in some areas contrasts with innovation in others. Many of these innovations may be approached through network or postcolonial perspectives.

The political reorganization of the eastern Mediterranean which Alexander and his successors achieved reconfigured networks across the whole region. Locations that this reconfiguration transformed into regional and international hubs were particularly likely to receive new cults of foreign deities. Tiny Delos, which achieved new prominence as an international trade port, received cults of Egyptian Sarapis and Isis, of Atargatis and Hadad from Syria, and eventually Ba'al and Astarte. Alongside them, the cults of the traditional gods of the polis, such as Apollo and Artemis, Zeus Polieus and Athena Polias, continued (Mikalson 2007: 209). Even relatively conservative Athens permitted cult associations to be formed by foreign residents for the worship of their own gods, such as Isis and Ba'al, without abandoning its traditional religious repertoire (Parker 1996: 256–81; Mikalson 2007: 210–13).

In Hellenistic Egypt, the country's complex ethnic and cultural mix was fertile ground for religious innovations and the emergence of hybrid forms. Under Ptolemaic rule, Egypt received a new influx of settlers from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including Greeks, Macedonians, Jews, and others, joining earlier communities of immigrants (Thompson 1988: 17; Dunand 2004: 240–1). Royal and priestly power had long been closely intertwined: royal power was legitimized through sacralization, in return for royal support for the priesthood and major sanctuaries (Dunand 2004: 198–202, 238; see further, in this volume, Kleibl, Chapter 41). The Ptolemies continued this relationship. However, despite close interactions between the Egyptians and the Greco-Macedonian population, the cultures coexisted rather than merging into one seamless whole (Bingen 2007: 246).

Out of the interstices between Egyptian and Greco-Macedonian culture emerged a new god, Sarapis, seemingly an indigenous deity, but in reality one whose iconography, divine personality, and powers reflect extensive Hellenic traits. His origin story, preserved by Plutarch (*De Is. et Os*. 361f–

362e), is impeccably Greek in form. Ptolemy I Soter ('Saviour') was commanded in a dream to fetch the cult statue of an unfamiliar god from the Greek colony of Sinope on the Black Sea. When the statue arrived in Alexandria, two advisers—one Greek, one Egyptian—identified it as Pluto, Greek god of the underworld. The god was thus named Sarapis, since this, Plutarch claims, was the Egyptian name for Pluto (Dunand 2004: 214).

Plutarch's account presents a conventional narrative of the arrival of a new god, brought from outside by divine command and royal action, and located within the Greek and Egyptian pantheons by relevant experts. The narrative ties the cult closely to the royal dynasty that promoted it. However, this neat story conceals a complex cultural operation that culminates in the emergence of a novel, hybrid god, neither fully Egyptian, nor fully Greek. Despite Plutarch's claims, Sarapis emerged from within Egypt, and was not an import from the Black Sea. Nor did his cult begin under the Ptolemies. The name 'Sarapis' appears to be a Hellenization of the Egyptian deity Oser-Apis, who was worshipped at Memphis by both Egyptians and Greeks (who called him Oserapis) long before Alexander's conquest of Egypt (Dunand 2004: 215). Oser-Apis was associated with death and the afterlife, which contributes to Sarapis' identification with Pluto, but the resemblance is otherwise slight. The resemblance between Sarapis and Pluto, on the one hand, and Oser-Apis, on the other, becomes more tenuous when Oser-Apis' iconography is considered: he was typically depicted as a mummified man with the head of a bull, bearing a solar disk between its horns. By contrast, representations of both Pluto and Sarapis adhere to Greek anthropomorphic tradition (see, in this volume, Kleibl, Chapter 41). Apart from his distinctive headgear, Sarapis resembled Zeus or Asklepios. In function, he combined Osiris' responsibilities for the dead and for agricultural fertility with Asklepios' miraculous healing powers. This specialism in healing represented a new departure for an Egyptian god (Dunand 2004: 215–18). Sarapis represents a complex hybridization of Egyptian and Greek religious elements. His name and connection with the underworld reflect his origins in the cult of Oser-Apis, while his healing powers and, above all, his appearance, spring from the Greek world. He is neither one thing nor the other, neither fully Greek nor fully Egyptian.

This in-between status allowed the cult of Sarapis to play a range of different roles in different contexts. Within Egypt, his worshippers seem to have been predominantly Greek, apart from at his original shrine at Memphis, where worship continued, probably largely in Egyptian style (Dunand 2004: 218–21; Bingen 2007: 249–50). For his Greek worshippers, Sarapis offered not only health and agricultural fertility, but also, by virtue of his ostensibly Egyptian origins, a figure who mediated the tensions of their position in Egypt, allowing them to worship what appeared to be a deity native to the land, who nevertheless lay safely within the familiar, Greek anthropomorphic tradition. By the same token, the association between the Ptolemies and the cult of Sarapis reinforced their claim to Egypt by demonstrating that a native god supported their rule, while his Hellenized image reflected Ptolemaic participation in the wider Greek world. Ironically, when the cult of Sarapis spread beyond Egypt and into the wider Hellenistic Greek world, the novelty of the god was forgotten and he was seen as a representative of the antiquity and strangeness of Egyptian religion (Dunand 2004: 221).

CONCLUSION

As has been shown, new gods may spring from many sources. They may be imported from other communities, like Asklepios and Meter, undergoing a varying degree of reinvention in the process; or they may be invented, like Sarapis, by transformation and recombination of existing elements, sometimes drawn from widely divergent contexts. The idea that a god may simply be introduced to a community by agreement and with no requirement that other gods be abandoned is challenging from a monotheistic perspective, but lies at the very heart of Greek polytheism. From any perspective in which ‘faith’ is central, the traffic in new gods may arouse suspicions of fickleness or cynical manipulation. Likewise, a secular or excessively rationalist perspective may struggle to accept that an exchange of cults conducted in the context of political negotiations is anything other than a mere symbol of political structures and relationships. Yet, as the arrival of Asklepios in Athens shows, the gift of a

god to another city carries weight as a political gambit precisely because of the conviction that the god could bring genuine benefits to the host city. Asklepios was no trivial gift to give or prize to win.

However, since there was no theological bar to the introduction of a new deity to a community already replete with gods, questions arise of how such transfers were agreed, and what political mechanisms governed them. The prominence of the political systems of the polis in authorizing new gods recalls Sourvinou-Inwood's model of 'polis religion'. However, the role of politics in regulating religion does not reduce religion to a mere reflection or symbol of political realities. Instead, it suggests the importance of religion in the establishment of those realities, as the case of Asklepios in Athens shows. Moreover, the traffic in new gods reminds us that 'polis religion' was far from a static entity, but was instead a field of activity and experience characterized by tension between conservatism and innovation, in which obligations to maintain established cults competed with the demand for new gods for new circumstances. The introduction of new gods thus sits at the heart of a complex nexus of political power, cultural transmission, and social identity, all of them set in the context of a worldview very different from our own.

Suggested Reading

Garland 1992 remains the fundamental study of the interplay of religion and politics surrounding the introduction of new gods. On new gods in Athens, Parker 1996 and 2005a are indispensable. For Asklepios, Wickkiser 2008 summarizes recent developments and advances new interpretations, but does not render Aleshire 1989 and 1991 or Edelstein and Edelstein 1945 obsolete—the latter in particular offers far more copious information, although its coverage of archaeology is weaker. On Meter, Roller 1999 supplants Vermaseren 1977 as the fundamental study. For Sarapis and religion in Egypt, Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004 is comprehensive and accessible, while Thompson 1988 offers a wealth of detail and analysis closely focused on Hellenistic Memphis, including the Sarapeion. Mikalson 2007 and Potter 2003 are accessible and rigorous starting points. Collar 2009 and Eidinow 2011 offer clear discussions of different approaches to network theory; Breiger 2004 is a highly technical

summary, which devotes some space (518–26) to cultural networks. Bhabha 1993 and 1994 remain seminal texts of postcolonial theory but are notoriously dense; Azim 2001 usefully surveys postcolonial theory in general; Hall 2012 and Morris 2012 summarize key themes and apply them to Greek evidence.

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CHAPTER 22

IMPIETY

HUGH BOWDEN

INTRODUCTION

THERE is a Classical Greek word that corresponds broadly to the English term ‘impiety’: *asebeia*. In the Hellenistic period the word is used frequently in the *Septuagint* and by Jewish writers like Josephus and Philo, when discussing biblical passages. In the Classical period it occurs frequently in tragedy and comedy, and in the works of historians (especially Xenophon), orators, and philosophers. Most of the surviving texts where *asebeia* and its cognates are used were written by Athenians, and there was, in Athens, a specific legal procedure relating to it, the *graphe asebeias*, which was used most famously to bring Sokrates to trial in 399 BCE. Inevitably, therefore, discussions of impiety in ancient Greece have tended to focus overwhelmingly on Athens, and on a number of trials supposed to have taken place in periods around the Peloponnesian War in the later fifth century BCE, and the Lamian War in the later fourth century BCE. Evidence from inscriptions from places beyond Athens can help to cast a different light on the meaning and scope of *asebeia*, but such evidence is limited.

One particular aspect of impiety, atheism, has received a lot of attention, both in Classical Athens and in modern scholarship. Ancient atheism is not easy to pin down (Bremmer 2006). The word *atheos*, in its earliest uses, had the meaning of 'godless', and it retained its pejorative tone when it was used to describe an intellectual position, from the fourth century onwards. Imputations of atheism were always made as a way of attacking individuals, and most of the texts labelling individuals as atheists were written long after the event (Winiarczyk 1984, 1992). It has been argued that concern about atheism and its potential dangers lay behind a number of legal cases, including the trial of Sokrates, which are sometimes used as evidence for a 'religious crisis' in Athens in the late fifth century (Parker 1996: 199–214). The evidence for some of these legal cases is of questionable reliability.

This chapter will follow the pattern set by previous discussions, and by the evidence, in focusing on Athens, where civic procedures in response to accusations of impiety were most developed, but it will also suggest that what applied there probably also applied in other Greek cities. Impiety is a negative term, in the sense that it is something that people are accused of, rather than being a neutral way of describing actions or thoughts. The word *asebeia* and its cognates are found most often in legal contexts, whether real, as in the Athenian law courts, or imagined, as in the works of Plato. It might therefore seem very much a phenomenon of 'polis religion', but, as will become clear, it can be understood as operating at a number of different levels, and different models of how religion operated in Greece can offer more fruitful ways of exploring the idea (Eidinow 2015).

Because our evidence for concern about impiety concerns a short period (the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE), and a limited geographical area, Athens, the choice of case studies has been made on different principles from those in other chapters. One, the trial of Andokides, makes use of contemporary evidence, in the form of speeches from the trial, to explore how accusations of impiety are bound up with the network of social relations in which all Athenian citizens were entangled; the second, on the accusations of atheism made against Anaxagoras of Klazomenai and Diagoras of Melos, demonstrates how difficult it is to pin down the implications of that term in Classical Greece.

PAST AND CURRENT DEBATES

Discussions of *asebeia*, and in particular of the scope of *asebeia* as it was understood in Classical Athens, have revolved around a number of questions, about which no consensus has been reached, and perhaps none will ever be (Pecorella Longo 2011). The issues begin with the nature of the evidence. There is only one trial that is recognized beyond doubt as resulting from a *graphe asebeias*, that of Sokrates. The trial of Andokides the following year, which is clearly concerned with impiety, is considered to have been the outcome of *endeixis*, that is, denunciation before a magistrate (Hansen 1976: 128–32). In speeches from a number of other trials where the case was not a *graphe asebeias*, but, for example a *graphe hybreos* (e.g. Dem. 21), accusations of *asebeia* were also made (Sancho Rocher 2011). In other cases the contemporary evidence does not mention *asebeia*, and it is only authors writing much later who give this as the reason for them. A further set of trials for *asebeia* are known only from much later sources, and their very existence has been challenged by some (Dover 1976: 39–40; Wallace 1994: 137–8; Gagné 2009: 215–7), while vigorously defended by others (e.g. Baumann 1990: 37–49; Donnay 2002: 156–7).

This lack of agreement over the nature of the evidence makes other questions more difficult to answer. There is debate about the scope of the term *asebeia* in Athenian law. Did it refer to a narrowly defined set of actions, for example improper activity within a sanctuary (Rudhardt 1960), or was it left largely undefined, and open to the interpretation of prosecution, defence, and jury in a trial (Cohen 1991: 203–10)? Answers to this question are determined in part by more general consideration of the ‘open texture’ of Athenian law: How closely were those involved expected to stick to the issues raised in the formal charge?

A distinct, but related, question concerns what activities might be classified as *asebeia*. Was the notion limited to actions, or could it refer to beliefs as well (Cohen 1991: 210–12)? Could it be applied to the promulgation of certain ideas through teaching or publication? These questions are particularly significant for any discussion of atheism as a form of *asebeia*. A further issue, not always directly addressed, but very

significant for the way in which 'impiety trials' have been approached, is the question of whether charges of *asebeia* were brought for genuinely 'religious' reasons, or whether they were a pretext for what were fundamentally 'political' attacks (e.g. Baumann 1990). Here, the very attempt to make a distinction is problematic, since it requires importing a distinctly modern conception of what counts as 'religious' (and, indeed, what counts as 'political') to the study of a culture in which such distinctions cannot be made—or at least not on the same terms as in any modern discussion.

Some more recent discussions have recognized the limitations of the 'religious'/'political' dichotomy, and have looked instead at the way in which accusations of impiety might have been used to mark out the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in Classical Athens. By focusing, in particular, on trials of women in the fourth century, scholars have considered how concerns about a range of 'deviant' behaviours, including the use of magic, might be expressed through accusations, or at least suggestions, of *asebeia* (Trampedach 2001; Eidinow 2010). Here, rather than being treated as being specifically about 'religion', or as 'political' devices in disguise, accusations of *asebeia* are seen as one aspect of the maintenance of social order, and this is in keeping with the definitions of *asebeia* we find in ancient authors. It is worth considering this before turning to other ways of addressing the nature of *asebeia*.

ANCIENT DEFINITIONS

In the pseudo-Aristotelean *On Virtues and Vices* we find an explicit definition of *asebeia* as 'error (*plemmeleia*) concerning gods and *daimons* or concerning the departed, and parents and homeland' (1251a). Polybios provides a very similar definition: '*Asebema* is to do harm in matters concerning the gods, parents and the dead' (36.9.15). By including parents and the dead, these definitions go beyond an exclusive concern with the divine, but extending the notion to include ancestors and homeland is not a very big step. Indeed, the Latin word *pietas*, from which the English word 'piety' comes, has the same range of meaning (Cic. *Inv. Rhet*. 2.66). Plato,

at one point, refers to '*asebeia* and *eusebeia* to the gods and to parents' (*Resp*. 615c; cf. *Symp*. 188c), but in other fourth-century texts and in inscriptions a distinction is often made between what is owed to the gods and what is owed to mortals. Thus, for example, Xenophon, referring to contemporary Persians, regrets 'their *asebeia* towards the gods and their *adikia* towards men' (*Cyr*. 8.8.7). A regular formula in Athenian honorific decrees from the fourth century onwards uses the positive form of the word and indicates that rewards are being bestowed on the recipients 'on account of their *philotimia* towards the Council and their *eusebeia* towards the gods' (e.g. *IG* II^3 416.20–1). This coupling of *eusebeia* and *philotimia* is something to which we will return.

The fullest ancient discussion of *asebeia* comes in Plato's *Laws*. This dialogue is presented as a conversation about establishing a law code for the imagined city of Magnesia on Crete, and the 'theology' of the dialogue is clearly in conflict with the 'traditional theism' of Greek cities (Mayhew 2008, 2010). Nonetheless, the laws discussed are traditional in form, and correspond to laws known from inscriptions and other sources. Book 10 of the work is concerned with legislation in matters concerning the gods, and it is there that a law about *asebeia* is formally set down (907d–e). But *asebeia* is mentioned several times in the later part of Book 9, which deals with crimes of violence. It is proposed there that if, in a fit of rage, a person kill their child, or their spouse, or their brother or sister, they must serve a period of exile, and be purified, but after that they may never share the house of their family: if they do so, a charge of *asebeia* may be brought against them (868d–869a). If they kill their parent, they are liable to a series of serious charges, including *aikia* (violence), *asebeia*, and *hierosylia* (literally temple robbery, or stealing sacred things: the implication being that they have stolen the life of their parent). In this case it is impossible for them to avoid being liable for punishment, and so the penalty is death (869a–c). Here we see *asebeia* as applying to actions concerning members of the family rather than the gods, fitting with the definition offered by Pseudo-Aristotle and Polybios. Another aspect of the legislation is worth stressing. It is not the action of killing a relative that leads directly to a *dike asebeias*; rather it is the action of the killer in moving back in with the family of the victim. A similar situation is referred to in a speech in the Demosthenic corpus when the speaker has been accused of being a parricide, but a *graphe asebeias* is brought against

his uncle for associating with him (Dem. 22.2). This is best explained by seeing *asebeia* here as being a condition rather than a category of action: subsequent acts committed by, or in association with, an *asebes*, are open to a *graphe* (or *dike*) *asebeias*. We will return to this notion.

There are two other cases where liability to charges of *asebeia* are mentioned in passing (799b, 941a), but the main treatment of the term is the discussion of the law concerning *asebeia* that takes up the whole of Book 10 (Mayhew 2008; Schöpsdau 2011: 364–459). This starts by identifying as particularly problematic the acts of licentiousness and outrages of the young (884a), in particular those committed against sacred things, public and private, or against magistrates, or the civic rights of individuals. This would correspond to the definition of *asebeia* just mentioned that includes offences against the *patris* ('homeland') as well as the gods, but, in fact, the discussion that follows focuses only on the gods. The Athenian in the dialogue here proposes that no one will commit an impious act (*ergon asebes*) if they hold a correct understanding of the gods. An incorrect understanding of the gods can take three forms: not believing that the gods exist, believing that they exist, but do not care for men, or believing that they can be swayed by prayer and sacrifice (885b). These three positions can be called atheism, deism, and traditional theism (Mayhew 2008: 76–192), and most of the Book is spent arguing against each position. It is not suggested that holding any of these views is itself *asebes* ('impious'), although it is assumed that even otherwise law-abiding atheists will speak freely against other views of the gods, and therefore win over others to their point of view, and that would be an impious act (908b–c). Obviously, 'traditional theism' was not seen as threatening in real Greek cities; how far atheism was seen as a danger will be the subject of the second case study.

The *graphe asebeias* brought against Sokrates lies in the background of another of Plato's works, *Euthyphro*. The dialogue contrasts Sokrates, who has just been indicted, with Euthyphro, who is trying to bring a charge of murder against his own father, an example of *asebeia* on the definition provided by Pseudo-Aristotle and Polybios. Here, however, while 'piety' and 'impiety' remain an important theme (Bruit Zaidman 2003), the discussion focuses on the terms *hosion* and *anosion* (usually translated as 'holiness' and 'unholiness', respectively), and develops more into a debate about the nature of the gods than about human action.

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

A different perspective on impiety can be found through a study of inscriptions where *asebeia* is mentioned (Delli Pizzi 2011; and, on sacred laws, see, in this volume, Petrovic, Chapter 23). In a late fifth-century 'sacred law' from Kos (*LSCG* 150 = *IG* XII, 4 283) it is stated that if anyone cuts down cypresses within the *temenos* (sanctuary area), or takes cypress wood away from the *temenos*, '*to hiaron asebeito*' (literally 'let him be impious to the sanctuary', 'he will be considered to be in a state of impiety with respect to the sanctuary'). In an inscription from Lindos (*LSS* 90, from 22 CE) in response to various actions, it is said of the offender *asebes esto poti tan theon* ('let him be' or, as mentioned, 'he will be considered to be in a state of impiety towards the goddess') or *enochoi eonto asebeiai* ('let them be' or, as mentioned, 'they will be liable for [prosecution for] impiety'). Another inscription, from Gambreion in Mysia (*LSAG* 16), states that, for women who fail to observe funerary regulations, *me hosion autais einai hos asebousais, thuein metheni theon epi deka ete* ('it is not holy for them, since they are in a state of *asebeia*', —or, 'since they have committed *asebeia*'—'to sacrifice to any of the gods for ten years').

It is not immediately clear what the implications of *asebeia* are in these cases. 'Sacred laws' are notoriously uninformative about procedures when they are broken (Parker 2004; Naiden 2008). In the last example it has been suggested that the inscription identifies an offence, *asebeia*, and a penalty, exclusion from sacrifices (Delli Pizzi 2011: 66–7). However, it is also possible to see *asebeia* as a condition into which the women have come, and their exclusion from the sacrifices as intended to protect the sacrifices from the dangers they pose in this condition. In this case, the *asebeia* applies to the women's relationship with the gods of Gambreion, and lasts for a defined period, but it does not extend, it would appear, to other aspects of their lives. On the same interpretation, the person cutting cypresses on Kos should be excluded from the sanctuary, and those in Lindos who go against the regulations laid down in the inscription should be excluded from any activities involving the goddess Athena. This interpretation fits closely with cases of kin-killers discussed by Plato in

Laws Book 9. There, it is clear, the killer's condition is complex: as far as the city goes his condition of *asebeia* is time-limited and can be purged, as he is exiled for three years and required to be purified. But his *asebeia* with regard to the family of his victim (which is his own family), is indelible and lasts for all time. As long as he keeps away from their house, he may live a normal life, but if he enters it, his condition of *asebeia* applies, and he is therefore liable for prosecution through a *dike asebeias*, for which the penalty will be death.

As well as these 'sacred laws', inscriptions also provide evidence for penalties imposed upon those charged with *asebeia* (Delli Pizzi 2011: 69–72). For example, in 374/3 BCE a number of Delians were condemned for impiety (*ophlon asebeias*) and exiled for life, because they had driven the Amphictions out of the sanctuary of Apollo on Delos, and had beaten them (*IG* II^2 1635). Here it might seem that there is a much simpler situation with an offence of *asebeia* (attacking sacred ambassadors) and a penalty of exile. However, it could also be suggested that the offence was so serious that it put the offenders into a state of permanent and complete *asebeia* with regard to Delos, and therefore it was necessary to try, convict, and expel them immediately. In the *Laws*, parricides are to be punished with death, and this can be understood on the same basis: that is, as a crime which puts the perpetrator in a condition of *asebeia* in relation to the whole of mankind and all the gods—as Plato's Athenian says, 'no law will permit it' (869c)—so their death is the only possible way of resolving the situation.

A parallel for understanding *asebeia* as a condition rather than an offence can be found with the case of *atimia*, the loss of civic rights (Hansen 1976: 55–90). As we have seen, *eusebeia* and *philotimia* are linked in honorific decrees from the fourth century onwards as representing the ideal relationship between the individual and the gods on the one hand, and mortals on the other. Their opposites, *asebeia* and *atimia*, would also be parallel. In Athens, there were a number of ways in which a citizen might become *atimos*, including cowardice, false testimony, and being in debt to the city (Hansen 1976: 72–4). Becoming *atimos* was not itself a penalty imposed by a court; rather, it was a condition that arose through the actions of the individual himself. It might also be limited in its scope (Andoc. 1.73–6). And although a person who was *atimos* was certainly in a vulnerable position, he would not face

prosecution unless he entered situations where his *atimia* was relevant—most obviously by taking an active role in Athenian politics. In a court case, the prosecutor's approach might be to establish that the defendant had done something which was not permitted for someone who was *atimos*, and then also demonstrate that the defendant had, at that time, been *atimos*, even though no one had previously suggested this. Such was the basis of the prosecution of Timarchos (Aeschin. 1). As we will see (Case Study 1: The Trial of Andokides), the same technique could be used in the prosecution of a supposed *asebes*.

The traditional approach to the study of impiety has been to see legislation and litigation about it as the way in which the polis controlled the religious activities (or even beliefs) of its citizens. The approach outlined here is significantly different. It looks at *asebeia* not in terms of acceptable and unacceptable acts, but as a range of conditions that determined the nature of relationships—between individuals and the gods, but also between individuals and the various social groups in which they operated, including family, larger kinship groups, the polis, and the wider world. This approach does not fit well into the model of 'polis religion' as it is currently conceived (see Kindt 2012: 12–35), although it might be said that what is now referred to as the 'polis religion' model is not what was intended by the person now most associated with the term (Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a, 2000b; see Kindt 2012: 5). On the other hand, social network theory might well offer a way of exploring further the range of contexts in which *asebeia* is found in ancient Greek life (Eidinow 2015; cf. Eidinow 2011). In the first case study, a model based on social relations will be applied to one reasonably well-documented instance of a prosecution for *asebeia*, the trial of Andokides.

CASE STUDY 1: THE TRIAL OF ANDOKIDES

Andokides was brought to trial in 400 BCE, and although the immediate issue concerned his activities in that year, the roots of the matter went

back to 415 BCE, when he was somehow involved in two serious affairs concerning the Athenians' relationship with the gods: the mutilation of the Herms, and the profanation of the mysteries (Furley 1996). The general scholarly consensus is that he took part in the mutilation, and that he admitted this when he informed on others who had taken part, but did not take part in the profanation; nonetheless, the two affairs came to be seen as part of a single conspiracy, and so Andokides was considered *asebes* on both counts. He went into exile, and tried twice to return to Athens, but only succeeded after the amnesty that marked the end of the civil war in 403 BCE. From that time he played his part in Athenian public life until he was prosecuted in 400 BCE. The prosecution failed, and Andokides carried on as a public figure until he was again prosecuted, this time successfully, on a different matter in 392/1 BCE, and went into exile again.

We have more evidence relating to the trial of 400 BCE than we do for most: as well as Andokides' speech in his own defence (Andoc. 1 with commentaries: MacDowell 1962; Edwards 1995), we have what is probably one of the prosecution speeches ([Lys.] 6, with commentary in Todd 2007: 399–488), as well as Thucydides' narrative of the events of 415 BCE (Thuc. 6.27–8, 53, 60), and Plutarch's (Plut. *Alc*. 19–22). It is impossible to establish with certainty what Andokides actually did, given the conflicting statements in the sources, but it is clear that he was accused of entering sanctuaries of the gods in Athens, which he was not permitted to do because of his involvement in the events of 415. A further charge, that he left an olive branch on the altar in the city Eleusinion during the mysteries, which no one was permitted to do, is dealt with briefly in his defence speech and dismissed (Andoc. 1.110–16). In Andokides' speech, he discusses several decisions taken by the Athenian assembly, in particular the decree (*psephisma*) of Isotimides, passed in 415, which excluded anyone who had confessed to impiety (71: *tous asebesantas kai homologesantas*) from Athenian sanctuaries, and the legislation relating to the amnesty of 403 BCE, which prevented people from being charged with offences committed before that year (88). What the various pieces of legislation involved is not entirely clear (Carawan 2004). Modern debate has focused on the issue of whether the terms of the decree of Isotimides were made null and void by the amnesty (MacDowell 1962: 200–3; Edwards 1995: 174–5). The trial has also been understood as 'unfinished business' left over from the events of 415 (Furley 1996: 104–5), which,

according to Thucydides, had at the time been seen as a threat to the democracy (6.28.2); they were also connected with the trial of Sokrates, which took place a few months later (Baumann 1990: 106–16; Todd 2007: 408–11).

On the specific question of Andokides' situation with regard to the mysteries, the understanding of *asebeia* outlined above ('An Alternative Approach') can help make things clearer. The claim of the prosecution is that he admitted that he had been involved in impious acts ([Lys.] 6.14), and thus was acknowledged to be in a condition of *asebeia*. The decree of Isotimides determined how such *asebeis* should be treated, but it did not determine who was or was not *asebes*, so, in fact, the question of whether the decree was covered by the terms of the amnesty was irrelevant. The prosecution is also concerned with the scope of the *asebeia*, suggesting that Greek cities might exclude from their own sanctuaries individuals who have committed *asebemata* ('impious acts') in Athens ([Lys.] 6.14). Andokides' claim is that he never committed an offence, and therefore has never been *asebes* (Andoc. 1.10, 29, 71), while his unchallenged presence in sanctuaries, and his political activities in the years between his return from exile and the trial, suggest that no one else recognized him as an *asebes* until it suited the man behind the prosecution, Kallias, to stir up old allegations.

But there is more to the issue of *asebeia* here than the narrow question of whether Andokides was permitted to enter Athenian sanctuaries: 'The case involved a clash of thought and authority in determining what is impiety and what is not . . . It was not a space where action met law, but where the city renegotiated the meaning and the application of its laws' (Gagné 2009: 232). The speeches on both sides address wider definitions of impiety. In particular, there is the question of whether Andokides informed against his own father, which, as we have seen, would count as *asebeia* (Strauss 1993: 261–8). Andokides justifies his informing on others as the only way he could protect his family (Andoc. 1.48–53), and he also launches an attack on the family life of Kallias (112–31), an aspect of the case that cannot be dismissed as a 'banal dispute . . . about a girl' (Baumann 1990: 115). The surviving part of the prosecution speech begins with a story told by an hierophant, and ends with advice from the son of a *dadouchos*, and Andokides in his defence questions Kallias' fitness to be *dadouchos* himself (1.124). It has been argued that Andokides, like

Kallias, was a member of the *genos* of the Kerykes, from which the Eleusinian *dadouchos* was appointed (and it is clear that the speaker of the prosecution speech was also connected to the *genos*) so that the trial was, above all, a family feud (Furley 1996: 49–52). It is therefore impossible, in this case, to distinguish between family matters and concern for the mysteries, for which the Kerykes had responsibility.

CASE STUDY 2: ACCUSATIONS OF ATHEISM AGAINST ANAXAGORAS AND DIAGORAS

According to Plutarch, an Athenian 'religious specialist', Diopeithes, introduced a decree that allowed prosecutions to be brought against those who did not believe in (or respect) the gods, or who taught doctrines about the heavens (*tous ta theia ou nomizontas e logous peri ton metarsion didaskontas*), a measure aimed at the philosopher Anaxagoras of Klazomenai, in order to weaken the position of Perikles, who was Anaxagoras' friend (Plut. *Per*. 32). It is suggested that a reference to a *graphe asebeias* against Anaxagoras in Diodorus (12.39.2) in connection with this is taken from the fourth-century historian Ephoros (Parker 1996: 209 n. 41), but this is not proof that a trial ever took place. However, it is clear that Anaxagoras' ideas could be the subject of public concern. In his *Apology*, Plato has Sokrates' accuser Meletos claim that Sokrates believed that the sun and moon were not gods, but that the sun was stone (*lithos*) and the moon earth (*ge*), to which Sokrates asks whether Meletos thinks he is prosecuting Anaxagoras (26c–d). In *Clouds*, Aristophanes attributes such views to the character Sokrates (225, 367), and this probably explains why the exchange is included in the dialogue. The representation of Anaxagoras' ideas on the comic stage suggests that they would have been recognizable to an Athenian audience, and this receives support from a remark of Sokrates in the *Apology* that his pamphlet could be bought for no more than a drachma in the *orchestra* (26e): this is taken to be a reference to an area of the *agora* where books were sold, and the

implication is that Anaxagoras' work was available to literate Athenians—although, by the time of Sokrates' trial, the pamphlets would have been on sale for forty years or more.

Were Anaxagoras' ideas perceived as dangerous? It has been suggested that opposition to the perceived atheism of Anaxagoras and others came from a fear that it might undermine traditional religion (Ostwald 1986: 274–90). Such a view might seem to reflect concerns of the late twentieth century CE more than the late fifth BCE, but when associated with the difficulties of the Peloponnesian War and, even more, the plague of the 430s, which Thucydides suggested led to a change in religious attitudes (2.47.4, 53.4) it has been considered to have some force. Thucydides suggests that the plague led to a loss of fear of the gods (*theon phobos*), with a consequent rise in lawlessness, and also the abandonment of some religious practices. Atheism could be seen to threaten the same, although this is not explicitly suggested in the ancient texts.

The case of Diagoras of Melos is somewhat different. Explicit evidence for him as the writer of a treatise on the divine comes only from late and unreliable testimony (Suda s.v. Diagoras). The earliest references to him as *atheos* come from the first century BCE. Cicero attributes to him sceptical aphorisms: for example, when shown the dedications made by those saved from shipwreck by the Great Gods of Samothrace, he asks where the dedications of those who were not saved are (*Nat. D.* 3.89). Cicero's near contemporary, Diodorus Siculus, reports that, in 415 BCE, 'Diagoras, who was called "the Atheist", came to be accused of impiety and, fearing the people, fled from Attica' (13.6.7). This accusation is referred to in two roughly contemporary texts, Aristophanes' *Birds* (1073) and the prosecution speech against Andokides previously discussed ([Lys.] 6.17). In the latter, Diagoras is said to have committed impiety 'in word, concerning the sacred things and celebrations of another place (i.e. Athens)'. The most straightforward interpretation of this, given the context of the speech, is that he spoke about the Eleusinian mysteries, as ancient commentaries on Aristophanes also suggest (Woodbury 1965). Aristophanes indicates that a reward of one talent was offered for his arrest, and, although this is a large sum, it is perhaps understandable since the accusation was made at the time of heightened concern about impiety associated with the mutilation of the Herms and the profanation of the mysteries (on which see 'Case Study 1: The Trial of Andokides').

It is pointed out by Andokides' prosecutor that Diagoras' *asebeia* was one of word rather than deed, but this rhetorical claim does not remove the point that this was not a case of unacceptable beliefs, but an unacceptable action, in revealing secrets of the mysteries. However, although our understanding of these accusations of atheism is limited by the paucity of the contemporary evidence, what seems clear in both cases is that the Athenians did not attempt to draw a clear line between belief and behaviour. As we have seen, Plato, in his *Laws*, assumed that atheists could not avoid advertising their views to others, and, as a result, winning converts. It could be argued by the prosecution that Andokides could be assumed to be an atheist because he was prepared to go to sea while under threat of divine punishment. Atheism led to danger, both for the atheists themselves and those who came in contact with them, and this was why it was unacceptable.

ATHEISM AND *ASEBEIA* IN ATHENIAN POLITICS

No discussion of *asebeia* and atheism should avoid discussion of the trial of Sokrates, although it is too large a topic to be discussed fully in a brief chapter. A number of recent discussions are cited later in this section, and there have been others (e.g. Stone 1988; Burnyeat 1997). There have also been a number of studies of 'Sokratic religion' more generally (e.g. McPherran 1996, 2011). If we consider Sokrates' trial alongside the case studies we have already examined, we can see that it raises essentially the same issues. As we have seen, suggestions of Sokrates' atheism figure in the contemporary evidence, leading to the view that 'no argument . . . can remove the charge of atheism from the formal indictment against Sokrates' (Parker 1996: 209). That formal indictment, as presented by Xenophon, is as follows: 'Sokrates does wrong in not *nomizon* the gods whom the city *nomizei*, but introducing other new divinities; he also does wrong by corrupting the young' (*Mem.* 1.1.1). How to translate the Greek verb *nomizein* has been a matter of ongoing dispute (e.g. Giordano-

Zecharya 2005; Versnel 2011: 539–59). The question is, in part, about whether it refers more to mental states ('believe in') or actions ('respect' or 'honour'). On the basis of the former interpretation, some scholars have argued that Sokrates was indeed prosecuted and convicted for holding a particular view, that is, the belief that there are no gods (Brickhouse and Smith 1989), although it is important to note that the indictment also included the charge of corrupting the young, so that it is persuading others to adopt the same view that is a large part of the problem—and it is clear that Plato's discussion in *Laws* is influenced by the events of Sokrates' trial (see 'Ancient Definitions'). On the other hand, Xenophon begins his *Memorabilia* with a defence of Sokrates against this charge, by pointing out that he sacrificed regularly and made use of divination (1.1.2), implying that *nomizon tous theous* involved actions.

One way to look at the range of meaning of the phrase is to focus on one of the accusations made against Andokides in the prosecution speech. As we have seen, the speaker points out that 'they say that many of the Greeks exclude people from their own temples because of *asebemata* done in Athens'; he then compares Andokides to Diagoras, and notes that because the Athenians sent out heralds to announce the bounty on the latter, an absent foreigner, while ignoring the impious citizen in their midst, they will seem to the Greeks to be more concerned with making threats than exacting punishment ([Lys.] 6.16–18). He then says that Andokides 'has demonstrated to the Greeks that he does not *nomizei* the gods' (19). The proof of this statement is that he has become a shipowner and travelled by sea, activities which put those who pursue them into the hands of the gods. The speaker goes on to show how the gods have now brought him back to Athens to face trial, having, in the intervening period, made his life miserable (19–32). Here, *nomizein* simultaneously carries both meanings: 'to believe in' and 'to respect' the gods. (It is not quite right to say it is 'poised between' the meanings, as suggested by Todd 2007: 454, quoting Parker 1996: 201 n. 8.) For the speaker, Andokides' atheism and his *asebeia* are inextricable. As we have seen, the trial should not be reduced to a debate about whether Andokides did or did not do something in relation to the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries, as it covered wider matters.

We do not have any prosecution speech from the trial of Sokrates (or indeed a genuine defence speech), although it has been suggested that the

author of the prosecution speech against Andokides might be Meletos, the main prosecutor of Sokrates (Todd 2007: 408–11). However, in summing up his defence of Sokrates in *Memorabilia*, Xenophon expresses amazement that the Athenians could be persuaded that Sokrates did not 'show self-control or moderation' (*sophronizein*) concerning the gods (1.1.20). This is a rather different term from *nomizein*, and may better reflect the tone of the prosecution, and suggest that there was more to the accusations than discussion of Sokrates' intellectual and political views.

Athenian legal processes did not deal in narrow definitions. Sokrates was involved in relationships with his fellow citizens in a variety of ways: beyond his actions there was his teaching, which was specifically mentioned in the charges against him, and, if we are to believe the image presented by his disciples Xenophon and Plato, there was his frequent challenging of the views of other Athenians in conversation, and his association with other intellectuals, including, in particular, sophists (cf. Pl. *Prt*. 314b–316a, Ar. *Nub*.). Sokrates' attitude to the gods, whatever it was, would have played some part in all of these relationships, and therefore to try to come up with a narrow view of what would have made the Athenians consider him impious is impossible.

Impiety in ancient Athens, and in Greece more generally, has therefore to be understood in its social context. Maintaining good relationships with the gods, with members of one's family, and with one's neighbours, was an important aspect of life in any Greek community, and it was of concern to individuals and groups alike. Anything that was perceived as likely to disturb these relationships, whether it was what someone said, or did, or perhaps even thought, was a threat that had to be dealt with, and *asebeia* was the term used to describe that threat.

Suggested Reading

Impiety is mentioned surprisingly little in recent overviews of Greek religion. In Jon D. Mikalson's *Ancient Greek Religion* (2005, second edition 2010) there is a discussion of 'piety', although, between the first and second editions, the word itself has been replaced by 'respect for the gods and religious correctness' or similar phrases. Robert Parker's *Athenian Religion: A History* (1996) has a chapter on 'The Trial of

Sokrates: And a Religious Crisis?' which covers several of the episodes discussed here, with reference to all the evidence. David Cohen's *Law, Sexuality and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (1991) also considers impiety trials, but has a somewhat different approach to that taken here.

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CHAPTER 23

‘SACRED LAW’

ANDREJ PETROVIC

INTRODUCTION: THERE IS NO ‘SACRED LAW’

AT the entrance to St John the Baptist Church in Heaton Mersey, Stockport, visitors encounter a typical no-smoking sign, depicting a black lit-up cigarette in a red circle, crossed out diagonally with a thick red line. Underneath, there is a stern warning: ‘NO SMOKING. It is against the law to smoke in these premises.’ Directly next to it, however, on the same sheet of paper carefully wrapped in plastic, the church officials have placed a much more interesting text: ‘We know you don’t smoke in church. Not smoking in church has been the self-policing custom for generations. But the Government is very afraid that you might anyway. So we have to put up this sign. We apologize, and assure you that we don’t really think you are impolite, inconsiderate or sacrilegious. Sorry.’

I raise this example because, in a number of ways, it encapsulates many of the problems pertaining to the traditional understanding of the term ‘sacred law’ in the scholarship on ancient Greek religion. While Greek

religion was never codified in anything resembling a book of scriptures, one of the most valuable sources of information about Greek cults comes from a body of evidence we have come to label as ‘sacred laws’. These are inscriptional texts, which were often set up in sanctuaries they relate to, detailing and prescribing various aspects of organization and of worship in Greek cults, and hence representing invaluable first-hand testimony for the historical realities of Greek religious practices.

However, many of the texts which scholars have traditionally referred to as Greek ‘sacred laws’ are prescriptive texts concerning religious rituals and matters of cult that were not conceptualized as laws in antiquity. Some Greek ‘sacred laws’ were texts that relied on existing laws and were products of rule of law, but were themselves not laws, rather, for example, contracts or decrees. Some of them started off as memoranda of ancestral customs, tacitly understood by everyone as norms of behaviour in certain cultic matters, and only later formulated as laws or official rules. Quite a few, however, remained memoranda of customs, self-policed (or commonly ignored), and never acquired legal status. Accordingly, some were official in character, adopting formal vocabulary and an appropriate narrative stance; some were laconically prescriptive one-liners; while others provide rich exegetical detail in dozens of lines, relating reasons for their introduction and/or making clear references to their place within the religious tradition that produced them.

Throughout the Greek world, as in Stockport, some ‘sacred laws’ were issued by civic authorities (government) and some by various cult magistrates; others by private individuals who formulated rules for the cults they founded with their own resources. Correspondingly, the authority of the law need not be legislative. Rather, it could be rooted in the power of a city-state institution, sourced from the sacral sphere through cult officials and divine agency, or based on the power of property possession in the case of private individuals; or, indeed, any combination of some or all of the three. Furthermore, many Greek ‘sacred laws’ simply relied on general awareness of religious traditions: the knowledge of *ta patria* or ‘the ancestral customs’ that was passed down through generations often provided the framework that both enabled and limited the normative authority.

This framework could also determine punitive powers: hence, Greek ‘sacred laws’ issued by a city-state could threaten financial penalties and

develop a fairly elaborate system of charging fines (cf. e.g. *LSAM* 45). Those issued by sacred authorities often make their potential transgressor aware of divine wrath ('God hates and punishes the offender' is a well-attested motif) or utilize *arai* ('curses'): 'May the person who [disrespects sacred fish or damages sacred property] be considered evil and may he perish through an evil destruction, having become food for fish' is one of the more imaginative examples (*LSAM* 17, Smyrna first century BCE; cf. also *LSAM* 20.41–5, Philadelphia first century BCE for a threat of *kakai arai* or 'horrible curses'). However, the spheres of civic and sacred authority and corresponding domains of punishment were seldom kept so distinct, since many 'sacred laws', irrespective of the underlying authority, threaten the wrongdoer with both divine powers and human jurisdiction. In contrast, others do not make reference to fines or punishment at all.

Should we understand the term 'law' in its traditional definition—that is, as the set of rules of a community that imposes penalties if they are not followed—a number of difficulties with the term 'sacred law' arise. The major problem is that many of the texts so described in our corpora, while being prescriptive in nature, were not 'laws' *qua* laws in antiquity. In addition, they are often generically heterogeneous texts, 'sacred' only in a rather general sense, in as much as they determined how to perform a cult-related matter—but even this they did in a variety of ways, from suggesting, to telling and requesting (see Parker 2004: 57, on decrees and 'exegetical laws'; Lupu 2009:3–11; and Chaniotis 2009, 2012, on the variability of these types of texts). Therefore, one could consult these texts and perform relevant rituals for a variety of reasons: for example, because it was what the members of a particular group traditionally did; because it was law-abiding behaviour, or because it was considered pious; or, as is often the case, for all of these reasons. To return to the example from Heaton Mersey: one does not smoke in church because no civil person would do so; or because it could result in a hefty fine; or, perhaps, because God may not be best pleased if one did.

Hence, like the church notices in Heaton Mersey, Greek 'sacred laws' differ greatly concerning their powers of persuasion. They stem from different authorities, and vary greatly in the types of mediation, enactment procedures, and the range of the sanctions envisaged (on sanctions in these texts, see Naiden 2009; on mediation Lupu 2009: 3–11). These texts are cultural products resulting from the religious, legal, economic, and ethical

concerns of dozens of ancient Greek city-states and sanctuaries. They survive captured on stones (and some lead tablets) in a wide variety of textual forms and material contexts, and, in addition, exhibit a marked diversity of formulation over time (on factors which induce change in rituals, the so-called 'ritual dynamics', see Chaniotis 2009). For these reasons, and others that have to do with history of scholarship, the term 'sacred law' is today almost universally understood to be ill-defined and largely misleading scholarly jargon, a term in need of re-evaluation and re-conceptualization (an excellent overview of this problem is given in Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2012).

WHERE ARE WE NOW AND HOW DID WE GET HERE? 'SACRED LAW' AND THE HISTORY OF CORPORA

The extant corpora of 'sacred laws' contain around 500 epigraphically preserved texts: Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge (2012: 173–5) count in *Leges Graecorum sacrae* (= *LGS* I), *Leges Graeciae et Insularum* (= *LGS* II), *Lois sacrées de l'Asie mineure* (= *LSAM*), *Lois sacrées des cités grecques: Supplément* (= *LSS*), *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (= *LSCG*), *Lois sacrées et règlements religieuses* (= *CID* I), and *Greek Sacred Law* (= *NGSL*), a total of 448 'sacred laws' (passages concerning texts from literary sources are found in Tresp 1914, but this is in need of updating). To these 448 texts Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge add 80 texts from Asia Minor and Kos, which Eran Lupu gathered in a checklist included in his edition of 'sacred laws' (*NGSL* Appendix B), bringing the grand total to 528 texts. This number is constantly increasing through new finds; regular reports on new texts, and updates concerning editorial work on already published texts are available in *EBGR* and *SEG* (both now also online).

In terms of their geographical distribution, these texts are found across the entire Greek world: from Tomi, on the Black Sea, in the north, via Macedonia, central Greece and the islands, with Crete, to the Upper Egypt in the south; and from the Adıyaman Province in south-east Turkey, over

central Anatolia to the western tip of Sicily in the west. Greater numbers of finds are associated with sites of greater ritual activity (and developed epigraphic habit): Athens, Delphi, Delos, Kos, and the cities of Karia are particularly rich suppliers of these types of text. In terms of historical distribution, the earliest inscribed 'sacred laws' date to the sixth century BCE (maybe late seventh century; cf. *NGSL* no. 6), their number increases throughout the Hellenistic period and first two centuries of the Imperial period, and declines after the third century CE.

These texts range in content from instructions about particular private or public rituals (such as prayers, sacrifices, and dedications), to regulations concerning the organization and execution of festivals and mysteries. Many are concerned with more mundane practical issues such as the management of priesthoods and duties of sacred officials (e.g. the allotment and sale of priesthoods), and handling or maintenance of temple finances and property. By way of a generalization, one can say that these texts have three basic foci: ritual activities, ritual agents, and ritual spaces (see Lupu 2009:9–110, for a discussion of the contents of 'sacred laws' pertaining to sanctuaries and sacred spaces, cult officials and cult performance).

Like their content, the form of these texts also shows great variation: among the more commonly encountered types of documents are decrees (*psephismata*, *diagrammata*, *sungraphai*, *diagraphai*, etc.), sacrificial calendars, boundary stones (*horoi*), contracts, dedications, proper laws (*nomoi*), building inscriptions, oracular and pseudo-oracular texts, and statutes. The shortest texts, such as inscriptions from boundary stones, consist of a few words only. A good example of this type is *LSCG* 109, from the precinct of Zeus on Paros, dating to the fifth century BCE, which contains the following entry regulations: 'Hypatos' precinct. No uninitiated and women allowed'. In contrast, decrees, laws, and contracts can consist of several dozens to more than a hundred lines: one of the longest ones, the regulation concerning Andanian mysteries (*LSCG* 65), consists of close to 200 lines (see further, in this volume, Kearns, Chapter 3).

Similarly, the authority on which such texts are grounded can vary greatly. 'Sacred laws' could be issued by private individuals, professional and religious associations, religious experts, and, more generally, personnel at sanctuaries, or by any political body. For example, 'sacred

laws' were issued by civic magistrates, demes, institutions of a polis, regional federations, (divine) kings, and gods themselves (on authority and sacred regulations, see Parker 2004; Petrovic and Petrovic 2006; Chaniotis 2009; Lupu 2009:4–5; on religious authority in Greece, more generally, see Parker 2011: 40–63; on the construction of authority in epigraphic contexts, Ma 2012).

Returning to the term itself, 'sacred law' is an ancient, but relatively rare, collocation, a direct translation of the ancient Greek phrase, *hieros nomos*. The first secure epigraphic references to *hieroi nomoi* are found in decrees and a hymn from the Hellenistic period (cf. *LSCG* 154, A 6–9 and 15, Kos, third century BCE; and *LSS* 45, 69, Actium after 217 BCE; *LSCG* 150, A 11, Kos, fourth(?) century BCE is uncertain; hymn of Isyllos of Epidauros, *IG* IV^2, 1 128.10). This term was just one of a dozen (or so) that the Greeks themselves used to denote prescriptive texts regulating their rituals and other dealings with the sacred. When they spoke of these texts as 'laws', much more common were references to just *nomoi* ('laws'), or *patrioi nomoi* ('ancestral laws'), rather than *hieroi nomoi*.

However, in the course of the development of scholarship on Greek religion, it was *hieros nomos* (rendered in Latin as a *lex sacra*) that became commonly used as a scholarly category for all prescriptive texts dealing with the sacred—in spite of the fact that modern collections of *leges sacrae* include more decrees than *nomoi*. Over time, in fact, the practice of grouping decrees together with *nomoi* caused methodological problems: first, it blurred the lines between various, otherwise distinct, types of primary evidence; and, secondly, it gave a misleading impression of generic consistency and homogeneity among these texts.

First uses of the term 'sacred law' as a scholarly category in the study of Greek religion (and a generic misnomer in epigraphy) go back to early attempts at systematization of the relevant material (see Gawlinski 2012: 3–4). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the term *lex sacra* started being used for almost any text (or even, at one stage, for relevant excerpts from unrelated texts) which laid out, announced, regulated, prescribed, changed, or proscribed aspects of Greek religious life. Thus, the category subsumed texts of a heterogeneous nature: as I have outlined, these texts varied greatly in terms of their content and form, and, perhaps most crucially, in terms of the authority that issued them. In truth, there is not much that holds these texts together. What provides a

notion of conceptual unity among the ‘sacred laws’ is that all of them concern the religious life of Greek communities and are typically prescriptive in nature—and that they are printed on adjacent pages between the same hard covers of a modern corpus.

Modern scholarship received the category of ‘sacred law’ from late nineteenth- century CE systematizations and employed it for a long time in spite of its shortcomings, not because these went unrecognized (they were, from early on), but because of the chronic lack of alternatives. For these reasons, the first two decades of the twenty-first century have witnessed several extensive research projects aimed principally at providing notional and definitional clarity to the material gathered in these corpora, and rethinking the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of texts, as well as establishing a critical language which would enable scholars to conceptualize and describe the ways in which Greeks regulated their cultic activities. Large-scale projects such as *Collection of Greek Ritual Norms* (= *CGRN*) conducted by Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge in Liège have already provided very helpful suggestions in this respect, especially as far as terminology is concerned. Instead of using the term ‘sacred law’, Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge recommend the term ‘[Greek] ritual norm’, which might significantly reduce the number of ambiguities in the scholarly use of labels for religious prescriptive texts of the Greeks. In their view, a new corpus should include, exclusively, texts that deal with rituals in the strict sense of the word, and texts that have a clear normative character (also at the level of language, ideally those texts whose prescriptive character is evident in the use of imperatives, futures, infinitives, or other linguistic markers of normativity; on terminology and on the project in Liège, see Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2012).

Difficulties with the category of ‘sacred law’ are a product of a series of historical contingencies. So, before we come to more recent attempts at systematizations, we should look first at the origins of the corpora and outline how collections have developed up to the twenty-first century. The most important modern corpora of ‘sacred laws’ are, in chronological order, Johannes von Prott and Ludwig Ziehen’s *Leges Graecorum sacrae* (= *LGS* I, 1896); Ludwig Ziehen’s *Leges Graeciae et Insularum* (= *LGS* II, 1906); Franciszek Sokolowski’s *Lois sacrées de l’ Asie mineure* (= *LSAM*, 1955), *Lois sacrées des cités grecques: Supplément* (*LSS*, 1962), and *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (*LSCG*, 1969); followed, more recently, by

Georges Rougemont's *Lois sacrées et règlements religieuses* (= *CID* I, 1977) and Eran Lupu's *Greek Sacred Law* (= *NGSL*, 2005, 2009).

This process of systematization starts with the work of Johannes ((Hans) Theodor Anton) von Prott, a scholar of extraordinary acumen, and obsessive personal devotion to Greek religion, who met a tragic fate. Von Prott was a close collaborator of Wilhelm Dörpfeld at Athens and a prodigious epigraphist whose PhD dissertation, supervised in Bonn by Hermann Usener, was concerned exclusively with Greek sacrificial calendars ('*Fasti Graecorum sacri. Pars prior*' ('Greek sacred laws. Part one'); this thin volume was published by Teubner in Leipzig in 1893, and is now available online at archive.org). A significantly expanded version of this dissertation was published in 1896 as *Leges Graecorum sacrae e titulis collectae: Fasti sacri. Pars prior* ('Greek sacred laws collected from inscriptions: Sacred calendars. Part one', published as a joint edition with Ludwig Ziehen, by Teubner, Leipzig); von Prott was 27 at the time. Over the next seven years, he grew increasingly consumed by his work on Peloponnesian mystery cults. In 1903, and following some sort of a deeply unsettling vision experienced at the Eleusinion at Sparta—a sanctuary whose foundations he discovered himself—he committed suicide in his room at the DAI (German Archaeological Institute) in Athens. Work continued under Ziehen as editor, and, three years later, the second part of the edition was published, also in Leipzig by Teubner: *Leges Graeciae et Insularum* ('Laws of Greece and the islands'; both parts are readily available as affordable reprints nowadays).

As a criterion for inclusion in the corpus, von Prott concentrated on the contents, rather than the genre, of the documents he collected. For the 1893 dissertation, he put together four inscriptions, all of which were concerned with the types and dates of public sacrifices at Athens (three texts) and Mykonos (one). However, along with the remnants of the Athenian sacrificial calendars, he also included a Mykonian *psephisma* (literally 'voting', hence 'decree'; (*SEG* 25.845 = *LSCG* 96)) about instituting sacrifices and determining sacrificial times. The first three texts, proper 'sacrificial calendars', dryly list the divine recipient of the sacrifice, along with the date and type of the offering. Typically, calendars are organized by local months, with an entry for each month including a list of names of the relevant gods and heroes, and specifying the offering or ritual a worshipping community is to provide or perform at a certain

time (on calendars, see Lupu 2009: 65–8). The Mykonian *psephisma*, on the other hand, while listing the times and types of sacrifices for a number of divinities, is also concerned with: a) the introduction of several types of sacrifice and the organization of a procession; b) the place of the kill and the handling and distribution of sacrificial meat; c) priestly privileges; d) restrictions concerning participation in sacrificial ritual; and e) financial issues, to name just some of the additional aspects of this text.

Like von Prott's dissertation, *LGS* I dealt predominantly with sacred calendars and affiliated texts, that is, inscriptions that laid out which rituals (mainly sacrifices) should be performed for which divinity on a certain date. The volume contains twenty-eight texts arranged geographically, with every entry conservatively and reliably edited with an erudite line-by-line commentary on epigraphic and religious matters. In terms of the genre of the documents, it includes sacred calendars, *psephismata* relating to or augmenting existing sacred calendars, as well as texts referring to themselves as ancestral laws (*patrioi nomoi*). While the volume is largely outdated, due to lack of alternatives, for the time being it remains the first port of call for any investigation of sacred calendars.

For the second volume (*LGS* II), the editors had planned to collect documents relating to royal cult: von Prott's task was to gather material pertaining to the cults of Alexander the Great and Hellenistic rulers, while Ziehen should have collected the rest. After von Prott's death, Ziehen continued his task. He collected material belonging to various epigraphic genres, with some inscriptions relating more to religious matters than others, and planned a further edition to follow. (This was to contain texts from Asia Minor, but it never came to be published.) The positive reviews he received encouraged him to collect even more—and more heterogeneous—material: one reviewer (see Rouse 1909: 23) explicitly mentioned the need to collect also votive inscriptions, catalogues, administrative enactments, and documents dealing with temple finances. In this context, the criteria for the inclusion of documents under the rubric '*lex sacra*' grew increasingly lax.

LGS II also saw changes in editorial methodology and the principles of organization of the material. Ziehen arranged material not by the content of a text, nor by the genre of a document, but, rather, according to the geographical region. *LGS* II contains 153 texts, and the introduction bears

testimony to Ziehen's quandaries concerning criteria for inclusion of the material in his corpus. It states that he decided not to include financial documents (by which he meant temple treasuries and funds; various financial documents of other types are included in *LGS* II), and to disregard excerpts concerning religious life in texts that primarily dealt with other issues. However, documents concerning subsidiary activities pertaining to cults were included in the corpus: along with documents regulating ritual practices, Ziehen also collected texts dealing with cultic infrastructure, such as documents concerning the administration and organization of cults (elections and sales of priesthoods, appointments, duties and privileges of religious magistrates), as well as texts and dossiers concerning temples and the protection of their property (dedications, euergetism, sacred funds, sacred land). In terms of ritual proper, the collection included all texts known at the time that dealt with any ritual actions, from sacrifices and dedications, to the organization of processions and festivals, and purity requirements. Thus, the distinction between texts prescribing ritual activity in its strictest sense, and texts dealing with the practical context in which a ritual activity was embedded became blurred. However, a great merit of Ziehen's collection is that he also made an attempt to arrange the material according to the issuing authority (for example, in the case of Attic material, he organized three sections: texts issued by states, texts issued by associations, and, finally, texts that had been issued privately). Thus, he highlighted crucial issues of agency and authority, which were to be taken up again in relevant scholarship only towards the end of the twentieth century.

The current standard editions of Greek 'sacred laws' (*LSAM, LSS, LSCG*) are associated with the name of Franciszek Sokolowski, a Polish Catholic priest, survivor of Sachsenhausen and Dachau concentration camps, and an American professor, whose monumental editions were published in French. Some fifty years after the publication of *LGS* II, at the suggestion of Louis Robert, Sokolowski picked up where Ziehen broke off. He first collected texts from Asia Minor, creating *Lois sacrées de l'Asie mineure* (*LSAM*): this collection contains eighty-eight texts, edited with a critical apparatus, bibliographical information, and a line-by-line commentary on religious, linguistic, epigraphic, and historical issues. It concluded with still-useful indices comprising a list of prices of priesthoods and sacrificial animals, important Greek words, and subjects.

The arrangement of the regulations followed geographical principles, and within each region, the texts were arranged chronologically. Again, all texts dealing with Greek cults were included except for funerary legislation, and Hellenistic royal cult material.

Lois sacrées des cités grecques: Supplément (*LSS*), published seven years after *LSAM*, was organized in the same way. It furnished a further 133 texts that had been found throughout the Greek world since the publication of *LGS* I–II and *LSAM*, but excluding the rich finds from Kos gathered by Mario Segre (*Iscr.Cos*). This material from Kos was partly included in *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (*LSCG*), Sokolowski's final volume (an excellent edition of Koan material is now available in *IG* XII, 4). *LSCG* was conceptualized as an update to *LGS* II, containing 181 documents, organized according to the same principles as the first two volumes, and accompanied by learned commentaries and indices that are still very helpful today.

Sokolowski's volumes significantly widened scholarly horizons, and still offer an indispensable tool for the study of Greek religion. Some reviews have pointed out occasional weaknesses in the handling of the texts (e.g. Forrest 1964), in particular with regard to some of Sokolowski's textual interventions. Although this is undoubtedly correct, it is, perhaps, too harsh: for *LSAM*, at least, Sokolowski had inspected the relevant stones himself, and made notes, but all of this material was destroyed during the war. This led him to propose restorations from memory, some fifteen years after conducting his autopsy (a brief mention of this is made in *LSAM*: 5).

Two corpora, smaller in terms of the number of texts, but both of exceptional importance, were produced after Sokolowski: Rougemont's *Lois sacrées et règlements religieuses* (= *CID* I) and Lupu's *New Greek Sacred Laws* (*NGSL*). *CID* I is a critical edition of thirteen texts found at Delphi. Rougemont, who shifts in his title and his terminology between 'religious regulation' and 'sacred law', does not go into much detail concerning criteria for inclusion or exclusion of material in his corpus (some thoughts on this are found in *CID*: 1–4), although he does explicitly criticize the category of 'sacred law'. Lupu's *NGSL*, on the other hand, updates Sokolowski's corpora by providing a modern critical edition with translation and an exhaustive commentary of twenty-seven texts not included in Sokolowski's volumes. The introductory section of this

volume (*NGSL*: 3–110) is one of the most detailed and fullest analyses of the relevant texts to date, and the first large-scale systematic attempt to tackle ‘sacred laws’ as a scholarly category. The volume is written with great rigour and attention to detail, even if with some admittedly conservative tendencies: Lupu’s approach to material and criteria for its selection are rooted firmly in the traditions of Ziehen and Sokolowski (his criteria are laid down in *NGSL*: 4–9). However, this volume is, for the time being, the first place to turn for an introduction and access to the material.

WHERE ARE WE GOING? CURRENT DEBATES

This brings us to current scholarship, and the tautological impasse, pointedly criticized by Robert Parker (2004: 57–8): ‘texts assembled in Sokolowski are sacred laws and sacred laws are the texts assembled in Sokolowski’. Given the current state of the corpora, and increasingly vocal recognition of difficulties with the term ‘sacred law’, scholars are gradually turning their attention to issues of typology, taxonomy, and the notion of authority in these texts. In order to dispense with the ‘scare quotes with which “sacred laws” regularly continue to be invoked’ (Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2012: 164), a number of alternatives have come to be used. Recent studies will typically employ any combination of adjectives ‘sacred’, ‘cult(ic)’, ‘religious’, or ‘ritual’ with nouns ‘regulations’, ‘ordinances’, and ‘norms’, while sacred law (without inverted commas) is used with either a subversive or a reactionary tone, or by the less well informed. Underpinning this tendency is research conducted over the past decade that has been decisively influenced by methodological concerns in legal history on the one hand, and ritual studies on the other.

Starting with the former, in 2004 Robert Parker drew attention to the distinction in our corpora between decrees issued by civic bodies on the one hand, and the texts he labelled ‘exegetical laws’ on the other. In his parlance, ‘exegetical laws’ were texts which, while not being formally

decrees, were mostly concerned with prescribing rituals in the strict sense of the word (sacrifices, prayers, purifications). This important distinction presents a milestone in our thinking about these texts, not simply because of the emphasis on formal or generic features of the texts, but especially because the distinction highlights the various levels of authority involved —a point which was developed further and most clearly articulated by Angelos Chaniotis in 2009, in his analysis of 'stratigraphy' of ritual norms, to which I will return shortly.

A second force driving current debates comes from ritual studies. In 2005, building on concepts of praxis by Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. 1972, 1990, 1998), and notions of agency and power developed by Anthony Giddens (esp. 1979), Krüger, Nijhawan, and Stavrianopoulou (2005) made a significant contribution to the debate on the role of ritual agency. In particular, they emphasized the distinction between emic and etic perceptions of the role of agency in ritual: what modern scholars call a 'sacred law' is, in emic context, a set of stratified heterogeneous agencies with distinct appellation. They argue that scholars should instead identify and engage with each of these separately. Various contributions in Eftychia Stavrianopoulou's 2006 edited volume consequentially also drew attention to the question of agency in these texts, and tackled the issue of the typological features of these texts, and how this relates to the issuing authority.

In a seminal article published in 2009, Angelos Chaniotis argued that many of the texts labelled as *leges sacrae* can be assessed in terms of their issuing authority. He posited a 'stratigraphy' (2009: 98–102) that starts with *ta patria ethe* 'ancestral customs', that is, those texts without a recognizable mortal author (and often without a fixed written form), which determine the 'core of the ritual practices'. Following *ta patria* are '*nomoi*' or 'laws', specific instructions with a recognizable human authority behind them, and typically with a fixed form. These determine the execution of ancestral customs of a polis. Finally, there are '*psephismata*', the decrees of a polis assembly, deriving from human agents and concerning variable elements in the execution of ritual, perhaps ensuring or increasing ritual efficacy.

One of the most recent (and most ambitious) contributions to the debate on taxonomy is in line with these developments: Matthew Carbon and Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge have published, in 2012, a programmatic

overview of their planned edition of ritual norms (*Collection of Greek Ritual Norms* = *CGRN*), which aims at resolving terminological difficulties and replacing Sokolowski's volumes. In order to do away with the ambiguity of 'sacred law', they introduce a new and clearly defined term 'ritual norm', and present criteria for the inclusion of material in their corpus. The term 'ritual norm' subsumes 'inscriptions [that], in a wide sense, have a normative character' and whose main subject matter is 'ritual practice and performance'. Accordingly, their collection will include texts dealing with purificatory and sacrificial rituals strictly defined, that is, in their terms, 'norms' exclusively prescribing ritual practices and performance (Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2012: 173–81).

Hence, there is a tendency in most recent scholarship to stress the importance of the epigraphic genre of a ritual text, and, directly related to this, to emphasize the significance of the authority issuing a norm. This is no coincidence: both issues have long been recognized as vital for engagement with these texts, but previous work prioritized the production of collections, sidelining other aspects.

This shift in emphasis in the study of ritual texts is of great importance, since it will prompt a re-examination not just of the terminology we use, or the organization of the corpora, but also the way we think about the practice and organization of Greek religion in the context of the Greek polis. The need for terminological clarity and a more sophisticated approach to the material is not simply prompted by philological concerns: greater understanding of the significance of terminological distinctions for the Greeks themselves, combined with analysis of the types of assertions of authority by different agents will allow us to raise crisper questions about the ritual competence and religious purview of individuals, religious and political institutions, or, in effect, of gods themselves.

AUTHORITY, AGENCY, GENRE: SOME OPEN QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Current debates focus on the issues of authority, agency, and genre, and have started focusing on formulations of ritual competence: How does the authority issuing a sacred regulation affect both the content and the textual form of a regulation? When it comes to both formulations and modifications of ritual actions, who is allowed to introduce what kind of a change and by which means? Do civic institutions have a set of realms of influence differing from that of divine agents? If so, do private ritual activities such as, say, cult foundations, rely on the civic or divine mode, or both?

These questions require analysis of the roles of both human and divine agents, as well as more attention to the role of genre (or textual form). In this sense, one could build on Chaniotis' 2009 model of a stratified hierarchy of norms, and posit that all texts codifying Greek ritual activities rely on three basic sources of authority. These are: (i) divine agents who are typically ascribed an active role in the founding of rituals; (ii) tradition, which serves the function of preserving them; and (iii) human agents (in various guises) who may be authorized to conduct modifications. In this chapter, it is possible only to scratch the surface of these issues and briefly sketch some of the more promising avenues of research; I will focus on the issue of divine agency.

The idea of divine agency in the formulation of ritual activities (on which see Busine 2005; Petrovic and Petrovic 2006; for later material, Brulé 2009) finds one of its clearest formulations in Plato's *Republic* (427b–c), in which the institution of some of the most important rituals is ascribed to Apollo at Delphi. In the ideal state, Plato's Sokrates posits, Apollo should authorize cult foundations, sacrifices (*thusiai*), and funerary rituals, as well as other services (*therapeiai*) of divinities (by which he means gods, daimons, and heroes alike):

> For of such matters we ourselves know nothing, and in founding our city, if we are wise, we shall take no advice and ask for no guidance save from our national guide . . . as he gives his guidance from his seat on the Omphalos in the centre of the earth, [he] is the national guide of all men.

Echoes of this idea are found throughout ritual texts, as well: divine agency is associated with foundations, sacrifices, and other rituals in the strict sense of the word, such as prayers and processions, among others. Often these texts are formulated as instructions received through oracles requesting the introduction or reform of a particular cult (typical formulae

include *ho Apollon echresen* (‘Apollo prophesied’), etc.; see Petrovic and Petrovic 2006 for examples of norms in which divinities institute rituals). One such case is *LSCG* 46 (third century BCE), an amendment to a decree regarding the cult of Bendis at Athens, where the incentive for the foundation of a temple is clearly associated with an oracle (albeit of Dodona, rather than Delphi): ‘. . . the people of Athens have given the right of possession of land of all the peoples to the Thracians solely and the right of foundation of the sanctuary in accordance with the Dodona *manteia* and the right to organize the procession . . .’ In this case, the Athenians act on divine instructions, obliged by Zeus’ mandate to allow the Thracians to found a sanctuary and organize a procession (see also *LSCG* 55 for the foundation of a sanctuary upon divine revelation).

In other cases, the establishment of a ritual or a sanctuary can be represented generally as a consequence of divine agency, with or without explicit reference to an oracle. An intriguing passage is found in a regulation from the sanctuary of Men of Attica, second century CE (*LSCG* 55), which states that ‘Xanthos Lykios, [slave] of Gaius Olbius, consecrated the sanctuary of Men Tyrannos, having been chosen by god, with good luck’. How did the god choose Xanthos—was Xanthos instructed by an oracle to found the sanctuary, or did a god appear to him in a dream? Both options could find proponents (see Lane 1976: 8–9, 24–9), but this is less important for present purposes than that the source of the initiative was divine agency. Similarly, in his well-known hymn inscribed in the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros towards the end of the fourth century BCE (or towards the end of the third), Isyllos of Epidauros describes the *hieros nomos*, ‘sacred law’ that establishes a procession in honour of Asklepios and Apollo, as deriving directly from the two gods, by saying: ‘I promised to have [the text] inscribed, if this proposition which I moved, was to become our law (*nomos*). For it did not come about without gods. Isyllos has found this sacred law (*hieros nomos*) by divine allotment (*theia moira*) never-wilting, ever-flowing gift for immortal gods’ (*IG* IV^2, 1 128.8–9 (for text and commentary see Kolde 2003: 60–74), late fourth or early third century BCE). In another example, divine king Antiochos of Commagene points out the divine origin of a law, presumably on sacrifices, saying: ‘On divine advice I had the sacred law (*hieros nomos*) inscribed onto sacrosanct *stelai*’ and ‘this law was pronounced by my voice, but the mind of the gods determined it’ (before

31 BCE, *OGI* 383 with Crowther and Facella 2003, ll. 109–11 and 121–2 respectively). Alongside foundations of sanctuaries, processions, and sacrifices, we find also prayers as the content of divine legislature. A text from Maionia (*LSAM* 19) contains a divinely sanctioned instruction on ritual prayer along with a threat of divine punishment in case of transgression: 'In accordance with the command (*epitage*) of the gods, the sacred house has issued the command that one should observe the prayer of nine days to Zeus Masfalatenos, Men Tiamos and Men Tyrannos. If someone disobeys one of these things, he will learn the powers of Zeus.'

These aspects—divinities construed as enforcers of their norms, policing the rituals and ensuring that they are observed or conducted properly, and threatening punishment if not—are well attested. Several examples of curses have already been mentioned. To these one can add some of the more explicit passages where gods threaten humans if they fail to observe the rules of a ritual. *LSAM* 20, a famous text from first century BCE Philadelphia, details a cult foundation for which Zeus has given instructions. Zeus has given one Dionysios revelations in a dream on how to perform cleansing and purifying rituals, and has requested that he found mysteries in his home, for which the god has also provided rules of conduct, including stern warnings: 'Man and woman who would do one of the proscribed things are not to enter this house here because great gods are established here and they look over these things, and they do not accept those who disobey revelations.' What does it mean that gods 'look over', literally 'observe', (*episkopeuo*) the rituals? What did the enforcement of these regulations look like in the cult's historical reality? These lines are, perhaps, indicative of the more significant role that the conscience of the worshipper started playing in cult in the Hellenistic period. Awareness of divine attention must have had a strong effect on the internal disposition of the worshipper, and made him question and re-evaluate his moral stance towards the gods, or, to put it in the language of Greek religious ethics, his *syneidesis* (a term which we encounter in increasing numbers from the Hellenistic period onwards, and which is rendered in Latin as *conscientia*).

What of the role of tradition, *ta patria*, and civic institutions? How do they formulate ritual norms? These questions, and many more, still await answers. But a first step in this direction might be to establish a clear taxonomy of the norms, by conducting an analysis of the attested types of

authorities setting out cultic regulations. (This could be based on the corpora mentioned in this chapter, and updated on the basis of *EBGR* and *SEG*.) If we gained a statistical overview of the extant 'sacred laws' by (epigraphic) genre, issuing authority, and content, we could start paving the way towards a fuller and more systematic understanding of the intricacies of Greek ritual life.

Suggested Reading

On issues of terminology and current and planned projects concerned with the material, see the excellent overview in Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2012. See there also an overview of minor corpora not discussed here, and monographs on some of the more important texts. For a detailed overview and discussion of the genres, typology, and content of traditional 'sacred laws', see *NGSL* 3–110, with further literature. For information on 'sacred laws' found after the publication of *NGSL* in 2004, see relevant volumes of *Kernos* with the *Epigraphic Bulletin for Greek Religion* (*EBGR*). On issues of normative authority, see Parker 2004, Petrovic and Petrovic 2006, Chaniotis 2009, and Bruit Zaidman 2009, and other authors in Brulé.

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PART VI

WHO?

CHAPTER 24

GODS—OLYMPIAN OR CHTHONIAN?

SUSAN DEACY

INTRODUCTION

THIS chapter's concern is with a debate that has been running in scholarship on ancient Greek religion for as almost long as there has been a conception of 'Greek religion' as a subject of scholarly endeavour. Where commentators have stood on the debate has borne on how they have interpreted the array of divine beings venerated by the Greeks, with implications for understanding how gods, heroes, and other categories of powers were conceptualized, and how mortals would position themselves in relation to these powers. The paradigm, first formulated in the late eighteenth century, has been adapted, critiqued, dismissed, and restated in various ways ever since. The terms I shall introduce it in initially are crude ones, but ones that have guided—and at times oversimplified and Christianized—how the divine world has been envisaged. On the one hand, there are thought to be the sky- or mountain-dwelling Olympians. These are the 'major' gods, distant from, but overall well disposed towards,

mortals. Their counterparts are the chthonians, thought of as lesser, literally and metaphorically darker, and older (see, in this volume, Kearns, Chapter 3). Such figures—the word 'god' is sometimes considered too grand for them—are linked with the well-being or otherwise of the land and with the Underworld. These dangerous, infernal, shadowy figures were, it has been held, propitiated not because the Greeks wanted to do so—unless the Greek in question was a particular kind of individual (a witch perhaps, or a sorcerer, or an inhabitant of an unenlightened pre-Classical age)—but out of fear of what would happen were they not appropriately venerated.

There is more. As summarized by Scott Scullion, 'in the flux of scholarly fashion Olympian and chthonian have been seen as coinciding with a rich variety of cosmic oppositions: rich/poor, aristocratic/democratic, Indo-European/indigenous, masculine/feminine, patriarchal/matriarchal, advanced/primitive, rational/mystical, and so on' (Scullion 1994: 76; see also, in this volume, Delforge and Pironti, Chapter 4). On the Olympian side fall the first sets of pairings in Scullion's list, with the advanced, rational, male-dominated Olympian gods constructed as exemplars of how the Greeks idealized their social order. On the chthonian side fall those beings that are variously interpreted as primitive, indigenous, local, and feminine. To this, one can add other binaries that have pervaded thinking about Greek religion, and which have been enabled by an Olympian/superior versus chthonian/inferior division. These include Panhellenic/local, religion/magic, community/individual, and polis/margins. (For an appraisal and critique of such oppositional thinking, see Kindt 2012: esp. 123–54.)

I shall begin by examining how the Olympian/chthonian model came to be devised. Then I shall consider various doubts that have been expressed concerning its usefulness, including by some of those who helped embed it into the study of Greek religion in the first place. Next I shall assess how the late twentieth century saw discoveries that challenged the prevailing way of understanding Greek worship as centring round an Olympian/chthonian binary, and how the debate came to be given fresh energy in the wake of the diverging stances taken by Scullion and Renate Schlesier. This section will also discuss the sources that have been used to support—or indeed challenge—the paradigm. Which evidence, I shall ask, has been taken as key? Does how it has been used tell us as much, if not

more, about the positions of particular interpreters than about those of the ancient authors whose work is being mined? Then I will move to this chapter's case studies, which will focus upon deities who have been branded as 'chthonian': Hekate and Dionysos. These sections will not be about these particular gods per se but will be using them as vehicles for exploring the scholarly concept of a polarized divine world, and for asking whether the ancients themselves could, under any circumstances, conceive of their gods in antipodal terms. Like other contributions to this book, the case studies will draw on sources from two broad periods, Archaic/Classical and Hellenistic. I shall consider how far aspects of the gods in question remain a theme throughout the evidence, and how different periods produced varying readings of each.

POLARIZING THE DIVINE

The notion of a divide between Olympian and chthonian originates with Georg Friedrich Creuzer (1771–1858) and Karl Otfried Müller (1797–1840). The latter regarded the Olympians as beings who, 'in their serene sublimity, demand for themselves only the sweet vapors of the sacrificial bones and fat', and the chthonians as those, 'who wish to take part in life by feeding on flesh and blood and demanding the whole sacrificial animal for themselves' (Müller 1833: 180; trans. Schlesier 1991/92: 48). The distinction came to be formally anatomized by Erwin Rohde (1845–1898), according to whom the Greeks conceived of two different forms of deities because this is what they had inherited from their prehistoric ancestors. These supposedly simpler, agrarian-based people venerated gods who, similarly uncomplicated and agrarian-based, were localized beings associated with the earth and the Underworld. According to Rohde, with the advent of the 'Homeric Age' there emerged a class of deities who were the polar opposite of these indigenous, place-confined beings. The conceptual differences were supposedly complemented by different ways of venerating each type of being. The Olympians were held to be worshipped by day, the chthonians at night. Olympians supposedly received white animal victims, the chthonians black ones. Sacrifices to the

Olympians were thought to take place on high altars, while chthonian sacrifices were conducted on low hearths or in pits. The sacrificial victim of the Olympian gods, it was thought, had its throat turned up to the sky, while the chthonian sacrifice was directed downwards. The bones and thigh fat from Olympian sacrifices were said to be offered to the god and the worshippers would eat the meat, while everything would be consumed to please the chthonian deity. In Olympian worship, libations were supposedly performed for both god and worshipper, while libations for the chthonians would be poured into the earth. Olympians were considered to have been worshipped accompanied with music, whereas their chthonian counterparts would be venerated in silence.

Thus was set in place a way to think about Greek deities based around binary and hierarchical thinking in the wake of a supposed prehistoric clash between two opposing conceptions of what a deity was. The most extreme of the twentieth-century proponents of the concept was Paul Stengel (1845–1935), so much so that the adjective 'Stengelian' has come to be applied to his conviction of the rectitude of the concept (see Bergquist 2005: 63). Among the most inventive adaptation was that of Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928) who aligned the concept of a dualized divine world with the theory, proposed by Johann Jakob Bachofen in 1861, of an original matriarchal, goddess- and earth-venerating religion eventually supplanted by the gods of the usurping patriarchs (Harrison 1903: esp. 1–31; Bachofen 1967). As a proto-feminist-matriarchalist, Harrison regarded this transition as something to be regretted rather than as the progress towards the 'higher' religion that Bachofen or Rohde and others had envisaged (see Robinson 2002: 164–9) but, by reversing the privileged pole, her work was still being guided by the polarized thinking of her predecessors.

Although, as I have set out, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars devised a way of thinking that divided deities into two differentiated camps, some of those who did most to embed this polarized thinking into scholarship also expressed a concern that it might not invariably do justice to Greek religion. Creuzer noted that it was not only the chthonians that were both 'mild' and 'awful' as the Olympian gods could also be thus (Creuzer 1810–1812: 170–2). Rohde was concerned that Olympian and chthonian gods could not always be easily distinguished (Rohde 1898: 273 n. 1). Comparable doubts have continued to surface in the work of those

who are, in certain other respects, guided by the paradigm. For example, Fairbanks argued that ‘we are not justified in describing any one type of worship as distinctively chthonic’ (Fairbanks 1900: 259). Wilamowitz-Moellendorff observed (1931: 244 n.3) that the term chthonic had become ‘das beliebte Schlagwort’ (‘the popular catchphrase’). According to Walter Burkert, ‘cultic reality … remained a rich conglomerate of Olympian and chthonic elements in which many more subtle gradations were possible’. Burkert expresses reservations as to the applicability of a self-perpetuating opposition ‘in which one pole cannot exist without the other’ (Burkert 1985: 202; for more on these, and other, assessments down to the late twentieth century, see Schlesier 1991/92: 43–4).

The state of play, as described by Scullion in a paper delivered in a 1997 conference on Olympian and chthonian sacrifice (subsequently published in the proceedings in 2005), was that ‘we are far nearer the opening of debate on this issue than we are to any kind of closure’ (Scullion 2005: 23). Scullion maintains that what may look like sources that challenge the classification are in fact ‘difficult and mixed cases’ (ibid.: 35; cf. Scullion 1994, which argues for the ‘fundamental soundness of the distinction between Olympian and chthonian gods and rituals’ (117)). On the other side of the debate stands Schlesier, who has argued that ‘the terms “chthonic cult” or “chthonian religion” should be discarded because they are misleading’ (Schlesier 1991/92: 50). The extent of Schlesier’s disagreement with Scullion may be exemplified by this quotation from her contribution to the discussion after the latter’s 1997 paper: ‘I got the impression that you were trying to save the concepts’ and ‘[were arguing that] all the terms you introduced, like modification and mingling and mixture, had the effect of justifying the distinction. But in my opinion they did just the opposite—they show that the distinction cannot help us to understand ancient Greek religion’ (Scullion 2005: 35).

Other scholars, including Scullion and Schlesier’s fellow participants at the 1997 conference, have argued that the categories need to be redefined rather than either retained or discarded, and that it is how scholars have divided up the categories that has been misleading rather than the categories themselves (see e.g. Henrichs 2005; and also Bremmer 1994: 43; Ekroth 2002). Rather, it is now held, the category that matters is ‘chthonian’ because it is the Greeks’ own. Thus, Parker has identified four kinds of powers which were classified as chthonian by the Greeks: the

ordinary dead, the exceptional dead (heroes), powers of the well-being of the earth, and the powers thought to inhabit the Underworld (Parker 2011: 80–1).

There are, in fact, only two passages that identify an absolute dualism between chthonian and Olympian, and the later author is likely to be drawing on the earlier (see here Schlesier 1991/92: 44–5). Moreover, the motivation for simplifying Greek religion by the earlier author needs contextualizing in relation to his particular political and rhetorical agenda. In *c*.400 CE, Porphyry wrote that Olympian deities receive temples and high altars (*bomoi*) while chthonians are worshipped on hearths and low altars (*De antr. nymph*. 6). Around 800 years earlier, in *c*.400 BCE, Isokrates painted a schematized picture of the Greek gods for Philip by, in Parker's words, 'exaggerat[ing] to make a particular rhetorical point that has nothing to do with religion' (Parker 2011: 80). Isokrates set out the precepts of Greek deities and their worship as follows: 'those who are responsible for bringing us blessings we address as Olympians, but to those who cause calamities and punishments we apply less pleasant names; private persons and poleis found temples and altars to the former group, whereas we honour the latter neither in prayers nor sacrifices, but perform rites of aversion against them' (5.117, tr. Deacy).

Beyond these two sources, there is limited evidence for such an extreme either/or division. For example, the *Oresteia*, 'that treasure house of chthonian concepts' (Scullion 1994: 111), categorizes gods in ways that do not match the rigid terms of the foundational scholarship on Olympian versus chthonian deities. For example, *Agam.* 88–91 lists four kinds of gods that are granted *bomoi*. For two of these, the 'high ones' (*hypatoi*) and the 'Ouranians', a high altar might seem suitable. However, the localized and earthly nature of the other two, the 'chthonians' and the 'market place gods', would—in the terms of the scholarly division of Olympian and chthonian—merit low altars. (On this and other passages that categorize gods in a more nuanced manner than the reductive Olympian–chthonian binary allows, see Schlesier 1991/92: 46–7; on the creation and destabilization of dualistic concepts of deity in the *Oresteia*, see Scullion 2005.)

In the late twentieth century, fuelled by the discovery of new evidence, notably the fifth-century BCE *lex sacra* of Selinous (Jameson, Jordan, and Kortansky 1993; see also Clinton 1996), the concept of a distinctively

chthonian way of worshipping a god came to be finally rejected (see e.g. Ekroth 2002; Henrichs 2005). In a paper at the 1997 conference already mentioned, Parker wrote that 'Greek sacrifices did not divide neatly into two classes, the Olympian and chthonian' (Parker 2005: 39). By 2011, Parker could state more prescriptively that 'chthonian sacrifice as a single type has vanished' (Parker 2011: 84).

Can we make a notion of Olympian and chthonian deities as irreconcilably 'single types' disappear as well? When Hera—one of the 'major' deities who might be seen to suit an Olympian characterization—smites the earth in the *Iliad* (14.271–9, 15.34–8) to invoke chthonian powers, she performs what O'Brien considers 'hardly the gestures appropriate to a wife of Zeus' (1993: 96). However, if we consider at these actions from a different angle, they look appropriate to the wife of a god who, as Olympios and Basileus, is quintessentially Olympian, but whose other epithets include such palpably chthonian aspects as Chthonios (Hes. *Op*. 456; *LSCG* 96.25) and Katachthonios (Hom. *Il*. 9.457). Moreover, Zeus Polias 'crosses the Olympian/chthonian boundary', according to Scullion (1994: 90), as does Zeus Soter, 'a partly chthonian household god' (Scullion 2005: 24). To these guises, one might add the serpentine Zeuses which include Philios, Agathodaimon, Ktesios, and the 'decidedly chthonian character' (Versnel 2011: 27) of Zeus Meilichios. (On the chthonian traits of Zeus, see further Boedeker 1983a; Parker 2011: 67–9, with notes 9–12.) As for Hera, in addition to evoking the powers of the earth, she is herself a chthonian deity, comparable to—or even a double of—Gaea, the goddess who is literally 'Earth'. For example, it is sometimes Hera (*Hymn. Hom.* 30.305–9, Stesich. fr. 239), rather than Gaea (e.g. Hes. *Theog*. 820–2, Stesich. fr. 239), who mothers Typhon, the most horrible of the Greek mythological monsters. If one avoids thinking in terms of Olympians as a distinctive class, or chthonians as another class, seemingly odd or marginalized features of 'major' gods stop being such. The next section of this chapter will turn to Hekate, the first of my case studies, to consider how this goddess has been simplified through being understood as a prototypically chthonian deity.

HEKATE: 'GODDESS OF NOCTURNAL SORCERY'?

A question that has been asked in recent scholarship on ancient Greek religion (see esp. Kindt 2012), and which is also a key concern of the present book, is whether the 'religious' can be confined within a construct that lets certain activities be marginalized. Certain deities have similarly been marginalized, including ones that, like Hekate, fall into a supposedly 'magical' characterization.

One of the ways of envisaging the divine world Burkert's concept of 'subtle gradations' (Burkert 1985: 202), is applicable to Hekate, a deity that many scholars, including Burkert himself, have simplified by asserting that, at her core, she is a deity of the Underworld, conjuring, and necromancy. In part, she *is* this, and Burkert's assessment of Hekate as 'the goddess of nocturnal sorcery who is able to enter the underworld' (1985: 200) can be supported by a range of evidence. For example, while Kreousa is offstage seeking to poison Ion with gorgon blood, the chorus of Euripides' *Ion* evoke Enodia, a deity often equated with Hekate, as 'ruler of night-wandering occurrences' (1048–9). At Eur. *Alex*. fr. 62h Collard-Cropp, Cassandra prophesizes that Hekabe will become one of Hekate's barking dogs (the similarity between the names Hekate/Hekabe might be more than coincidental: see Lyons 1997: 154–5). Hekate is 'pleased with dark ghosts' according to her Orphic Hymn (1). A second-century AD epiphany of the goddess represents her with snaky feet and hair and a terrible glare. The manifestation is preceded by howling dogs and ends when she disappears into a chasm (Lucian *Philops*. 17.22–4; for commentary and further references, see Ogden 2002: 273).

Using sources from two broad periods, I will show that these aspects of the goddess could be augmented. However, I shall also show that, as early as the Archaic period, a more nuanced and variegated image of the goddess was formed, which does not fit the standard interpretation of the goddess (despite the attempts of several scholars). Between these sources, a change takes place inversely to the traditional evolutionary model: she starts out as multifaceted then, later, becomes narrowly chthonic.

The divine world of the Apollonios Rhodios's *Argonautica* is 'split' into the 'two halves' that Parker emphasizes it never was in actuality (Parker 2011: 80). The gods of Olympos, anthropomorphized to the point of absurdity, are turned into 'pieces of Alexandrian sculpture' (Żybert 2012: 374), while other deities, prominent among whom are Hekate and Rhea, are archaized and marginalized. Hekate is the 'Roarer' (*Brimo*: e.g. 3.861, 2), the 'Night-Wanderer' (e.g. 3.148, 4.829, 4.1020), the 'Queen of the Dead' (3.862), and—simply 'Earthly' (*chthonien*: 3.862, 4.148). She is connected with 'drugs of all kinds, some healing, some destructive' (3.803), which can put out fire (3.531) and halt rivers, the stars, and the moon (3.532–3). When the goddess is invoked, by Jason (3.1191–224), Jason comes to the place of worship alone, secretly and by night, and performs rites that match the image of the chthonian sacrifice portrayed in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholarship . The sacrifice takes place over 'a pit in the ground a cubit deep' over which Jason 'slit the throat of the sheep, and duly placed the carcass on top'. Then, he kindled the logs by placing fire beneath it, and poured mixed libations over them, calling on Hekate Brimo (1207–11). When the 'dread goddess' hears the invocation 'from the utmost depths' (1213) she appears with snakes around her head and accompanied by barking hellhounds.

While the depiction of Hekate by Apollonios represents the goddess as a nightmarish leftover from an earlier divine stratum, in one of the earliest and, indeed, foundational works of Archaic Greek literature, Hesiod's *Theogony*, the goddess is depicted in similar ways to the 'major' deities, and indeed merits inclusion among this class of deities. I explore how the goddess is depicted in this source to illustrate a recent, normalizing, trend in the interpretation of Hekate (the pioneering study is Zografou 2010), which finds Hekate to be as much a part of the divine network as the likes of Apollo, Hermes, Zeus, and Athena.

Like the much later Apollonian Hekate, the *Theogony*'s goddess is an anomalous hangover from an older stratum. Whereas her fellow Titans are variously defeated by Zeus—for example, by imprisonment, swallowing, or smiting—she is the one 'whom Zeus the son of Kronos honoured above all others' (411–12) through 'splendid gifts, to have a share of the earth and the unfruitful sea' (413) and 'to receive a share of honour also from the starry heaven' (414), where she is 'honoured exceedingly by the deathless gods' (415; all translations in this chapter are my own). This

representation of Hekate as a deity honoured excessively by Zeus and others has been seen as a problem in need of a solution, and—as is typical of problems identified in Greek religious scholarship—a solution has been forthcoming. Hesiod has, it has been argued, taken a break from his narrative of the rise of Zeus to celebrate a goddess of special significance to his family or community, for example as the principal goddess of the local peasantry, or as the localized Boiotian version of the Mistress of Animals, or as the favourite deity of Hesiod's family (on these and other such assessments, see Johnston 1990: 22 n. 4).

What such evaluations cannot allow for is how typical Hesiod's Hekate is of goddesses and of deities more broadly. Like several of the goddesses of the Homeric Hymns, she is at once integrated into the divine world overseen by Zeus, and never wholly subordinated to this god. (On the 'operational' power of goddesses in the hymns, see Clay 1989.) Moreover, as a deity with a range of fields of operation, she is typical of the major deities. Those she favours include assemblymen, warriors, athletes, horsemen, seafarers, fishermen, and herdsmen (Hes. *Theog*. 432–47). Fishermen, 'whose business is in the dazzling, tempestuous sea', call upon the goddess along with Poseidon (439–42). As a herdsmen's deity, she is partnered with Hermes, with whom 'she is good in the byres at increasing the stock . . . and in the droves of cattle and herds of goats and flocks of woolly sheep' (444–6). This depiction of Hekate co-presiding over particular fields of competence exemplifies the tendency of the Greeks to envisage gods working in pairs. For example, Hestia and Hermes are complementary powers of space (see esp. Vernant 1983: 127–75). Meanwhile, Athena—an especially busy networker—is paired with a series of deities including Hephaistos (skilled craft), Demeter (agriculture), and Ares (war), and, like Hesiod's Hekate, shares jurisdiction for the sea with Poseidon and herdsmanship with Hermes (see Burkert 1985: 141; Deacy 2008: 47–58). There is just one aspect that conforms to traits standardly connected with chthonian powers and even this one falls outside the standard depiction of the goddess as power of sorcery, the night. This is the role of *kourotrophos*, granted by Zeus on his acquisition to power, that made her 'a nurse of the young who after that day saw with their eyes the light of all-seeing Dawn' (450–52; on kourotrophic deities, see Price 1978; Boedeker 1983a).

As far as the interpretation of Hekate is concerned, then, the Olympian–chthonian prism has some mileage. The goddess is depicted in a range of sources as a power of the Underworld and sorcery, who, in the simplistically dualistic divine world of Apollonios, is counterpoised to the courtly and modernized Olympians. However, such a depiction cannot cover all aspects of Hekate, who is represented comparably to other major deities as early as Hesiod.

DIONYSOS: 'PRINCIPLE THAT DESTROYS DIFFERENCES'?

Since Nietzsche (1872) made Dionysos the dissolver of boundaries and purveyor of unity of opposites (see Baeumer 2006: 337–49), and Rohde 'provided a much more scholarly version' (Seaford 2006: 7) of Nietzsche's god, Dionysos has been understood in relation to various paired opposites, including polis/margins, Greek/barbarian, god/hero, god/mortal, life/death, and communality/individuality. This section will consider some of the ways in which Dionysos was constructed in ancient Greece in relation to a polarity of Olympian/chthonian and related poles of life/death and mortal/immortal. It will then examine how, as a Mystery god, Dionysos variously unifies, mixes, and transcends and transgresses these boundaries as, in Charles Segal's words, the 'principle that destroys differences' (Segal 1982: 234). The section will illustrate how the concept of an Olympian/chthonian binary can apply to Dionysos but not in the rigid terms of the scholarly paradigm.

Dionysos features among the Olympian Twelve, as on the Parthenon frieze, where a figure generally held to be this god (no better candidate has come forth with the possible exception of his fellow boundary-crosser, Herakles) is seated companionably between Hermes, on whose shoulder he rests his arm, and Demeter, whose left foot crosses his right leg (E24–26; on the identification of these deities, see Neils 2001: 161–4). As well as having a home among the great Twelve, Dionysos has some of the hallmarks of a hero as one born from a divine–mortal (Zeus–Semele)

union, who dies. However, he gets dying out of the way before he is actually born as he is at once killed and blasted to godhead by the thunderbolt of Zeus. Then, after being rescued by Zeus and sewn into the god's body, Dionysos emerges for a second time as (though) his father's monogenetic child. (Ancient accounts of the conception, death, and birth of Dionysos include Phld. *De piet*. 60 Gomperz = Hes. fr. 346 MW; *P. Oxy* 30.2509; Hes. *Theog*. 942; Pind. *Ol*. 2.24–6, *Pyth*. 11.1; Eur. *Bacch*. 6–12; Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.4.3–4.; Nonnus, *Dion*. 8.413–14). Alternatively, before ever reaching the womb of Semele, let alone the thigh of Zeus, Dionysos was considered to have already entered a cycle of death and rebirth. First, he was killed and dismembered by the Titans. Then his body parts were collected by the gods and formed into a meal and fed to Semele. Duly impregnated (by her future son), Semele gave birth to the reborn god. (The various, often esoteric, sources and their place within the 'Orphic' myth of Dionysos are pieced together in Graf and Johnston 2007: 66–93.)

A concept of Dionysos as a god moving around a cycle of death and life can be traced at least as far back as one of Heraklitos's riddles of coinciding opposites: 'Were it not for Dionysos for whom they march in procession and chant the hymn of the phallus, their action would be outstandingly shameless, but Hades and Dionysos are one, him for whom they rave and celebrate Lenaia', B 15 DK). The fragment has been read as a triumph of reason over an earlier, coarser religious stratum (see Wildberg 2011: esp. 209–11). However, by setting up a polarity of Dionysos/Hades which intersects with those of life/death, sex/death, and obscenity/piety, the fragment is not only differentiating the two gods, but depicting them as coinciding duplicates (see, further, Adomėnas 1999: 92–4; Wildberg 2011: 232).

I am now going to build on what Richard Seaford cautions (2006: esp. 11), namely that there has been a good deal written about Dionysiac dualities that is overly sweeping and abstract. According to Seaford, the way to make sense of this aspect of the god is to contextualize it in relation to Greek concepts of death, afterlife, and the Mystery cult. A comparable set of Dionysian oppositions and unities to that expressed by Heraklitos is represented on three fifth-century BCE bone tablets from Olbia (*OFB* 463–5), a major location of Dionysiac mysteries. Here, the god is construed as the outcome or culmination of paired opposites rather than, as in Heraklitos, being himself presented as one of a pair. One of the

tablets is inscribed as follows: ‘Life death life | peace war | truth falsehood | Dion’ (*OFB* 465). I have deliberately kept the name of the god as ‘Dion’ rather than, like Graf and Johnston (2007: 186), supplying the remaining letters of ‘Dionysos’. The name ‘Dion’ might be inferring a deity who is ‘god’ or even ‘God’. (Cf. the ancient conception of Dionysos as the ‘one’ god, on which, see Versnel 2011.)

I shall now turn to how such a unity of life/death and attendant polarities, including earth/heaven, thirst/satisfaction, and thirst/drunkenness, is expressed in a set of tablets dealing with the release from death to a blessed afterlife by Dionysos Bacchios. These have generated increasing interest over recent years (see Cole 2003; Graf and Johnston 2007; Edmonds 2011; and, in this volume, Edmonds, Chapter 37). Inscribed on gold leaves, they were originally hung around the body of the deceased initiates. The tablets set out what the deceased person has been advised as an initiate, and inform—or remind—the initiate how he or she can affect what happens after death. They date from the fourth century BCE to the mid-second, or even third, century CE, and have been found in a variety of locations across the Greek mainland, islands, Italy, Sicily, and Magna Graecia. Thus, they attest a commonality of Dionysiac worship over several centuries and across the Greek-speaking world.

Among the tablets’ concern is the relationship between two of the categories of chthonians that Parker classifies (2011: 80–1; see ‘Polarizing the Divine’, above)—the ordinary dead and heroes—as well as a possible third category, the Underworld gods. At 2.11 according to Graf and Johnston 2007, the deceased is instructed to drink from the waters of Memory so as, ‘from then on rule among the other heroes’. According to 3.4, the initiate will become ‘a god instead of mortal’. The motif of transformation into gods is also found at 5.9 and 9.4, and the initiate is qualified for inclusion among the race of gods at 5.3, 6.3, and 7.3. The kind of god in question could be a chthonian, akin to the various chthonic deities evoked in the tablets. These include ‘the queen of the chthonians’ (5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 9.1), chthonian Kore (4.8), Eukles (‘Good Name’ also attested as an epithet of Hades), and Euboleos (‘Good Counsellor’, a specialized guise of Dionysos, and of Zeus, and the name of an Eleusinian Mystery deity). (For Eukles and Euboleos, see 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, 9.2; for discussion, see Graf and Johnston 2007: 123.) However, this kind of god could be a sky deity rather than a chthonian. The initiate of tablet 5 has

‘sunk beneath of the breast of the chthonian Queen’ (5.7), but has also ‘flown out of the heavy, difficult circle (5.5). At 25.9, the initiate will acquire a new name, Starry, that suits one who has ascended rather than descended. Alternatively, to make a choice between which type of journey is being undertaken would be to miss the point about the coincidence of Dionysos opposites that the tablets construct.

CONCLUSION

This closing example concerning the liberation of the soul of the deceased from an ordinary afterlife shows that an Olympian/chthonian—or, at least, astral/chthonian—binary could have meaning for the Greeks in the particular context of Dionysiac mysteries. The example also shows that, rather than being expressed in rigid terms, the relation between the two poles was a fluid one that interrelated with other oppositions. Thus, it lacks the abstracted, stand-alone significance that modern scholarship has accorded it.

An inflexible division of gods into Olympian and chthonian reduces the divine world to a misleading level of simplicity which says more about the scholarly environment and Christianized assumptions of the pioneers of the study of Greek religion than it does about how the ancient Greeks themselves perceived their gods outside certain deliberately simplified representations: for example, Isokrates’ to aid his mission to persuade Philip towards leniency; Aischylos’ to hang together various themes of the *Oresteia*; or Apollonios Rhodios’ to present a schematized Hellenistic literary concept of the divine. The divine world cannot be reduced to a conception that even some of its adherents have found too ordered, rule-bound, and consistent to be true. Gods could be ‘Olympian’ and ‘chthonian’ and much more besides. A notion of a strictly polarized divine world is a skewed one.

SUGGESTED READING

The applicability or otherwise of the categories Olympian and chthonian is explored in Schlesier 1991/92, which argues for their rejection, and Scullion 1994, which makes a case for their retention. Parker gives an overview of the state of the debate at 2011: 80–4. On the issue of whether the Greeks differentiated between Olympian and chthonian sacrifice, or indeed had a concept thereof, see Hägg and Alroth 1997, Ekroth 2002, and now Parker 2011: 283–6. On the range of traits of Hekate including those typically understood as chthonian, see Boedeker 1983b and Johnston 1990. Johnston's principal interest is the Neoplatonist adaption of the goddess beyond the time frame of this book, but she also traces the prehistory of this concept. The interpretation of Hekate as a deity with typical polytheistic traits has been spearheaded by Zografou 2010. On Hekate and other deities in the *Argonautika*, see Lye 2012 and Żybert 2012. The wealth of recent scholarship on Dionysos includes Seaford 2006 and Schlesier 2011, both of which evaluate previous debates. Studies in English on the Bacchic gold leaves include works by Cole 2003, Graf and Johnston 2007, and Edmonds 2011, all of which demonstrate the significance of this body of evidence for an understanding of Greek religion.

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CHAPTER 25

GODS—ORIGINS

CAROLINA LÓPEZ-RUIZ

INTRODUCTION: DO ORIGINS MATTER?

IN our need to organize the world around us within graspable categories, pinning down the 'origins' (real or invented) of any particular thing serves the purpose of both classification and explanation. Scholars of Greek religion in the last decades, however, have consciously resisted this impulse, after realizing that the enquiry into 'origins' is often a dead end. It is, unfortunately, the case that, when it comes to the ancient world, ultimate origins of specific cultural phenomena are usually impossible to retrieve. Moreover, even when we know them, there is not necessarily an obvious correlation between the 'origin' of the cultural item and its *perceived* origin, which usually plays a greater role in its reception and history. More importantly, it is often not clear how ascertaining origins explains the *function* of the specific object of enquiry within its culture. The Greek gods are no exception and stubbornly elude this type of analysis, since their origins lie long before the first narrative testimonies about them. Before Homer and Hesiod (mid to late eighth century BCE), the names of Greek gods only appear listed in the Mycenaean

documentary texts, which provide little information beyond proving that a god, with his later historical name, existed in Greece at least by the late thirteenth century BCE. Moreover, linguistic, literary, archaeological, and iconographic evidence contribute in different ways to the understanding of the gods' composite personalities and trajectories, but not one of these elements in isolation offers a straight answer to the 'origins' question.

The preoccupation with origins has receded since the 1960s and 1970s, as the study of ancient myth and religion has moved 'from evolutionism to functionalism and from an interest in individuals and their thoughts to an interest in groups and their needs' (Graf 2009: 130). This shift was propelled by the structuralist school, led by Jean-Pierre Vernant (1914–2007), which emphasized the analysis of the pantheon as a whole and the structures of meaning that governed its internal dynamics, as opposed to focusing on individual gods. At the same time, Walter Burkert (1931–2015) revived the previous interests in origins, especially of rituals, while also attending to the importance of ideological systems and mythical structures (e.g. the dynamics of the gods as a family system). Burkert also introduced the study of the gods to the fields of biology and anthropology and promoted the exploration of Near Eastern comparative evidence. Comparativism has come to the fore also in the studies by Martin West, looking into both the Indo-European heritage of (West 2009) and Near Eastern influences on the ancient Greek gods (West 1997; see, in this volume, Bremmer, Chapter 40).

Each of these approaches offers valuable insights, but not necessarily into the gods' origins proper. More importantly, modern scholarly analyses might not necessarily represent what Greek worshippers thought at the time about their gods. To some degree, that will always elude us, but it is, nonetheless, necessary to begin any discussion by considering cosmogonic accounts and other mythical texts, as well as non-mythical accounts by historians and ethnographers. Second, we should contrast ancient views to modern approaches through which scholars have attempted to reconstruct the early history of the gods out of pieces of evidence and references not available in antiquity. These modern tools fall, in turn, into three types: linguistic (origins of the names, namely, Indo-European, pre-Greek, or other, such as Near Eastern); comparative (e.g. similarities with other gods in other cultures); and archaeological (iconography, cultic activities, etc.).

After surveying these approaches, three case studies (Zeus, Herakles, and Aphrodite), will exemplify the types of problems and debates surrounding the enquiry into the gods' origins, and the need to combine different types of sources and disciplines.

GREEK PERCEPTIONS

The Greeks told stories about their gods' births, geographical origins, and travels. The trajectory of the gods (as well as of sacred objects and statues representing them) was inseparable from their personality and status, as we see most explicitly in the *Homeric Hymns*. Gods, like heroes, were often imagined to have been born or raised in some remote place at the fringes of the Greek world, or even outside of it (for instance, Zeus' birth in Crete, Apollo's in Delos, or Dionysos' wanderings through Asia), only then establishing their places of worship. The gods were not perceived as static entities, or as belonging to one place, and the way in which they 'owned' a place and a cult had little to do with their 'real origins' (from a modern scholarly standpoint) and more with the narratives that the Greeks preferred to tell about the god and the way in which his identity and authority was constructed through those narratives. For example, in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, the god is born on Delos to a wandering Leto, thus connecting his birth story to the island on which one of his most famous sanctuaries later thrived; his early wanderings throughout the Greek world then led him to establishing his oracle at Delphi (*Hymn. Hom. Ap*. 216–339). Hesiod's *Theogony* showcases how Zeus attained his ruling position after facing multiple threats since his birth, overcoming them through violent struggles and wise negotiations. Similar stories of birth, 'early life', and wandering fill other myths about gods, which we cannot discuss here, but, in general, these mythical narratives have little to do with the historical, anthropological, origins of the gods.

Furthermore, not all ancient sources (in fact very few) are interested in explaining the origins of the gods. For instance, although Homer's epics are earlier and are a literary model for the *Homeric Hymns*, they portray, as it were, a 'later' stage in divine politics, one in which a stable order of

Olympian gods is *already* in place. The poet behind either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* is not interested in divine genealogies, which are assumed and tied to the established family bonds, while his focus is on the heroes on earth and how they relate and interact with the gods. Still, some interesting traditions about the gods' mythological origins occasionally surface in the Homeric poems: for instance, Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus and Dione in the *Iliad* (5.170–1), unlike in Hesiod, where she is the daughter of Ouanos (Sky) (*Theog*. 185–206). Hephaistos also has a different genealogy in Homer, as the son of Hera and Zeus. In Hesiod, Hera begets him alone, in response to Athena's birth from Zeus' head (*Theog*. 924–9). Finally, the sea gods Tethys and Okeanos are, in Homer, the primordial parents of the world (*Il*. 14.201, 246, 302), signalling a different cosmogony than the one Hesiod followed, where Earth and Sky become the primordial couple, sharing the first stages of creation with other entities (Chaos, Eros, Tartaros, etc.) (*Theog*. 116–27).

Hesiod's *Theogony*, a poem dedicated specifically to the birth of the gods, illustrates the point that the Greeks elaborated stories about the gods' origins to make sense of the gods *as they knew them*: anthropomorphic entities mostly born from other gods in an undefined time, forming a complicated and growing family group. Tracing their origins meant glimpsing the world's beginnings. In Hesiod, the earliest components of the cosmos were (in order of appearance): Chaos, Earth (Gaia), the Underworld (Tartaros), and Love (Eros); then Darkness (Erebos) and Night (born from Chaos), and Aither and Day (born from Night) (*Theog*. 116–33). In the idea of the 'first elements', the tradition of theogonic myth is inseparable from cosmogony and from the type of enquiry that also produced the beginnings of natural philosophy (see López-Ruiz 2010: 105–9).

The issue of divine origins became a central matter of philosophical and theological speculation among the authors of the so-called Orphic cosmogonies. This corpus is extremely complicated (see West 1983 for an overview), but it is worth noting that the Orphic poets and thinkers paid much attention to the etymologies of divine names, whether real or imagined. They also crafted alternative cosmogonies and theogonies, including new divine entities (e.g. Protogonos and Phanes), while they positioned Zeus at the centre of a re-creation of the universe (see López-

Ruiz 2010: 130–70. On old versus new divinities, see also, in this volume, Kearns, Chapter 3).

In the Classical period, when the genre of historical writing begins, we find some interest in the origins of the gods, but not as much as expected. The best Classical source for this type of discussion is Herodotos, especially in Book 2.43–64 of his *Histories*, in which the historian postulates the non-Greek origins of various Greek beliefs and practices. The most categorical and famous of his statements is that 'the names of almost all the Greek gods came to Greece from Egypt'—albeit not directly but through the Pelasgians (a name used by Greeks to denote the indigenous peoples of prehistoric Greece) (2.50.2). Exceptions to this rule are, according to him, Poseidon (whom he traces to Libya, 2.50.2–3), the Dioskouroi, Hera, Hestia, Themis, the Graces, and the Nereids (2.50.1). One can only wish that he had explained what he meant by 'the names' (*ta ounomata*), an issue outside our scope here (see commentary in Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007).

Herodotos elaborates this idea in connection with the oracle of Dodona, allegedly introduced by priestesses from Egyptian Thebes (2.51–4). Besides that, he considers Herakles to be, originally, an Egyptian god (2.43–4), the same worshipped by Phoenicians in Tyre and Thasos (2.44) (meaning Tyrian Melqart, to whom Herakles was assimilated), and believes that the seer Melampous learned the worship of Dionysos from the Phoenicians who came with Kadmos to Boiotia (2.49.3). Similarly, Herodotos traces Aphrodite to the 'Heavenly Aphrodite' of the Phoenicians from Askalon (i.e. Ashtart/Astarte) (1.105.3), from where she was brought to Greece via Cythera (on which see 'Aphrodite: A Cypro-Phoenician Goddess and her Names', below). The historian, finally, attributed the 'stabilization' of the Greek pantheon to the poetry of Hesiod and Homer (2.53).

Herodotos' enquiries are the best example of how the Greeks, not unlike modern scholars, reached their own conclusions, informed by available sources and through a collage of synchronic perceptions and deductions, whether these contained 'scientific' truths or not. Herodotos also shows that, whenever the Greeks were in contact with other peoples, the process of *interpretatio* was bound to take place, whereby the Greeks drew comparisons between their own gods and those of others: Demeter and Isis, Dionysos and Osiris, Aphrodite and Astarte, Zeus and Amon, Zeus

and Baal, Herakles and Melqart, and so on. Herodotos also views the rites he observed in Egypt as equivalent to Greek rituals. This does not mean he overlooked cultural differences, since his observations often dwell on stark contrasts of conduct and customs. Nonetheless, when it came to the gods and their rituals he noted that there was a tendency to draw common denominators, whether Egyptian or Greek names were used. Hence, the gods and their perceived origins served as *loci* that facilitated the ongoing processes of cultural exchange.

There are also cases in which the introduction of new gods falls within historical times (see, in this volume, Anderson, Chapter 21). The cult to the Anatolian 'Great Mother', the goddess Kybele, was adopted in the Greek world in the sixth century BCE, and she maintained an 'Asiatic' exotic identity even when she was partly assimilated into Greek mother-goddess figures such as Gaia and Demeter. The god Asklepios was introduced in Athens in 420/19 BCE from his famous cult in Epidaurus. The tragedian Sophokles, apparently, temporarily hosted the live snake that represented the newcomer (Parker 1996: 175). The inauguration of a cult to the Thracian goddess Bendis in the Piraeus is alluded to at the beginning of Plato's *Republic* (328a), and attested in other sources. Adonis, Aphrodite Ourania, and the *thiasos* (drinking association) of Sabazios were other cults introduced by Cypro-Phoenician settlers in Athens and slowly taken up by the Greek population (Parker 1996: 160–1).

In Hellenistic times, when Greek culture spread throughout the Near East, the process of *interpretatio* was part and parcel of the cultural encounters between Greeks and others, with whom they shared a polytheistic system with a daunting capacity for expansion. In some areas of Hellenistic Egypt, Demeter was worshipped as Isis; but Isis herself, in her Egyptian form, was also accepted in the Greek and Roman worlds during this period (Johnston 2004: 104–5; Stephens 2005). We even have cases of the introduction of new, composite, gods in the Greek pantheon, such as Serapis in Alexandria, usually attributed to the deliberate agency of the first Macedonian king in Egypt, Ptolemy I Soter, in order to facilitate Greek–Egyptian cultural integration. The reality behind this event, however, is more complex, as the Osiris-Apis composite god in his Egyptian version was already worshipped by the Hellenomemphites (Greeks settled at Memphis) before the Ptolemies, where it coexisted with

the Hellenized Serapis (Moyer 2011: 147–8; see also, in this volume, Kleibl, Chapter 41).

Regarding the origins of the Olympian gods and the host of gods of the 'older generations' (primeval and nature gods, nymphs, etc.), it is a small consolation that the Greeks themselves were as ignorant as we are, if not more. They too projected into the remote past deductions from the present configuration of things, constructing continuities that were, more often than not, fantastic or inaccurate.

MODERN ENQUIRIES

Two developments in the history of scholarship have changed the field of classics and greatly expanded the horizons of early Greek civilization, offering new insights into the Greek pantheon: first, the development of comparative linguistics since the late eighteenth century situated Greek in the family of the Indo-European languages. Second, the decipherment of the Linear B script in the 1950s demonstrated that the late Bronze Age Aegean was Greek-speaking, pushing back by over four centuries the first testimonies of the Greek language, to about the thirteenth century BCE if not before. The earliest testimonies of Greek were, until then, the poems of Homer and Hesiod and the roughly contemporary, early alphabetic inscriptions from the mid-eighth century BCE onwards. So what do these sources tell us about the gods' origins?

Beginning with this second development, Mycenaean Greek texts provide the oldest attestation of the Greek gods. These documents, however, are not literary but exclusively administrative: they are the records of the Mycenaean palaces, with lists of properties, offerings, labour forces, taxes, and so on. This means we have only bare names, listed in relation to offerings, but no information about their functions or qualities (see Ventris and Chadwick 1956). Moreover, only about one third of the Greek gods of the Archaic and Classical period appear in these documents. The gods listed in the Linear B tablets whose names survived into historical times are: Ares (and a goddess Areja), Artemis, Dionysos, Eileithya, Enyalios, Erinys, Hephaistos, Hera, Hermes, the Mother of the

Gods, Poseidon (with a feminine counterpart Posidaeja), the Winds, and Zeus (with a feminine counterpart Diwija). There are also names of independent gods that become epithets in later religion (e.g. Enyalios, Potnia, Paion). Hera, also, might have been originally a title for one or multiple goddesses, from the same word as 'hero' (*heros*, itself of unclear origin) (Dowden 2007: 48). She might not have always been the consort of Zeus, and alternatives occasionally appear: in Homer's *Iliad* (5.170–1) Dione is his wife, a consort attested in a cult at Dodona (this or another Dione is mentioned in Hesiod's *Theogony* 17). Her name is, strictly speaking, an equivalent of that of Zeus: literally, she is 'Ms Zeus' (like the Mycenaean Diwija). In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 1–13, to give another variant, Leto is the official consort of Zeus on Olympos.

More striking than the continuities are the absences from these texts, specifically of the principal 'Pan-Hellenic' gods Aphrodite, Apollo, Athena, and Demeter. This does not exclude the possibility that they were already part of the pantheon of some Greek community not represented in these texts. However, as we shall see, Aphrodite may well be a goddess imported from the Levant or Cyprus in the Iron Age. Apollo is often also considered a relatively 'young' god, whose name resists analysis. One hypothesis connects it with the *apella*, a warrior gathering in some Greek states (Dowden 2007: 49). Once idealized as the living image of the young Greek athlete (Graf 2009: 172–7), Apollo's character is complex and his multiple spheres of jurisdiction (music, plague, prophecy, purification, healing, the sun) make him akin to both Indo-European and Near Eastern deities, especially to the West Semitic pestilence-god Resheph and to Egyptian solar divinities (Burkert 1985: 143–9; West 1997: 55; Dowden 2007: 48–51; Graf 2009: 130–42). As for Athena, she is, in all likelihood, a pre-Greek goddess, probably attached from her very beginning to the name of the city of Athens (*Athena*), as she already appears in Mycenaean as *atana potinija*, 'Lady of Athana (i.e., Athens)' (Burkert 1985: 139; Deacy 2008: 33–44). Demeter's origins might be quite old, if her name can be analysed as *da-meter*/*mater*, 'Mother Goddess', understanding the *da* as some form for 'earth', although its equivalence with Gaia and Ge is not as straightforward linguistically as it might appear. Poseidon may have originally been the consort of Demeter, if his name is analysed as containing the same element, *Potei-da-on* (Dowden 2007: 48).

Despite its limitations, the Mycenaean evidence has shaken some previous assumptions about the formation of the Greek pantheon: Apollo, traditionally perceived as the 'quintessential' Greek god, is absent, while Dionysos, already considered an imported and exotic god by the Greeks, turns out to be among the old Mycenaean gods. The ambivalent god of wine was 'structurally' foreign, as required by his qualities as an outsider who brought a necessary degree of relief and disorder to the communities by means of wine, drama, and initiation rites (Seaford 2006; Dowden 2007: 48; cf. Burkert 1985: 161–7). Otherness was a function of his identity in Classical times, not of his historical origins. Finally, little can be said about other principal gods, including Artemis, Hermes, and Hephaistos. Their names are obscure and there is no ancient lore about their origins beyond their mythical birth stories. Scholarship, therefore, tends to set aside the question of their 'ultimate origins' and focus instead on their characterizations and cults (Dowden 2007: 48; for Artemis, Dowden 2007: 51–2 and Burkert 1985: 149–52; for Hermes, Burkert 1985: 156–7).

The Greek pantheon as we know it, therefore, was neither 'set' in the late Bronze Age nor completely unfamiliar, as quite a degree of continuity is evident. In fact, the pantheon was never completely 'set', as local constellations of gods varied in configuration, and even in historical times the pantheon continued to expand. The idea of the 'Twelve Gods' or Dodekatheon was itself unstable (it does not 'work' unless main deities are excluded) and seemingly a relatively late construction, possibly based on Anatolian models (Dowden 2007: 43–4; Bremmer 2010a: 6).

To the epigraphical testimony provided by the late Bronze Age and Archaic texts, we can add a different type of 'linguistic archaeology' provided by the field of historical linguistics. This discipline has the unique potential to reach independent conclusions about the gods' origins. To simplify the working principle, if the name of a god can be traced to a pre-Greek Indo-European formation (by comparison with other Indo-European languages), it can be argued that the divinity, along with that name, came to the Hellenic peninsula with the Greek speakers sometime in the early second millennium BCE (as opposed to having been independently formed in Greece or imported later). The case of Zeus provides a good example: his name is clearly Indo-European, from the root **djew-/diw-* that also lies behind our word 'day'. However, Zeus is

really unique in his straight-forward 'Indo-Europeanness', and his clear-cut linguistic genealogy does not completely match his historical personality (see 'Zeus: More than an Indo-European Sky-God', below). It is also interesting that the Greeks did not use the common word for 'god' in the Indo-European languages, that is, the one used in Latin (*deus*) and derived from the same root as 'day'. While Greek maintains an adjective *dios* for 'brilliant, divine', their word for 'god' (*theos*) is related to the word for 'sacred', and has cognates only with Indo-European languages attested in Western Asia and Anatolia (Armenian, Lykian, Lydian, and Luwian; Bremmer 2010a: 1).

Other, more obscure deities, have Indo-European names; examples include Zeus' consort in Boiotia, called *Plataia*, 'Broad', with parallels in the Vedas, and Helen, who was worshipped in Sparta since the Bronze Age and, some think, may be traced to a 'sun-maiden' divinity, from the same root as *helios* (Bremmer 2010a: 1–2). To these we can tentatively add the name of Demeter and the Mycenaean goddess Potnia, 'mistress', from a root **pot*- (cf. Greek *posis*, 'master', Latin *potis*, 'able', 'empowered') also present in the name of Poseidon. As an epithet, the title is, in historical times, attached to Athena, Hera, Demeter, and other goddesses. In turn, a subset of Greek gods classified as Indo-European have, as names, Greek words proper, usually divinizations and personifications of natural phenomena, such as Helios (Sun), Eos (Dawn), Nyx (Night), Hypnos (Sleep), Thanatos (Death), to mention but a few (see Stafford and Herrin 2005). Still, from the plethora of personified divinized elements attested in Hesiod and Homer, only Helios (Sun) and Eos (Dawn) have a traceable Indo-European lineage *beyond* Greek culture (West 2009: 194–227).

To sum up, our scholarly traditions have strongly attributed to Greek culture an Indo-European inheritance, but we have to acknowledge the fact that only a small part of the Greek pantheon can be traced to a pre-Greek, Indo-European milieu. This is a problem only if we insist on equating linguistic kinship or genealogy with *cultural* trajectories and even *ethnic* identities. The Greek language might be essentially Indo-European, but Greek culture or rather *cultures* took form in an eastern Mediterranean context, in contact with both a pre-Greek Aegean substratum and with Near Eastern civilizations (Arvidsson 2006: 1–62; López-Ruiz 2010: 8–16). The closest Indo-European peoples they interacted with were

Anatolian (Hittites, Luwians, Lykians, and others), who were themselves culturally integrated within the Mesopotamian and Levantine realms. Both Greek and Anatolian cultures defy the rigid classifications of historical linguistics that are sometimes used to delimit and separate cultural entities. The Greek gods indicate the contrary, that the borders of religious identities are porous and malleable and change over time, and they do not necessarily follow our modern discipline-oriented categories.

ZEUS: MORE THAN AN INDO-EUROPEAN SKY-GOD

As already mentioned, Zeus is the standard-bearer of the Indo-European component of the Greek pantheon. It is indeed significant that the head of the pantheon and 'king of the gods', bears a clearly pre-Greek name of Indo-European stock. The 'day-god' or 'sky-god' has left traces in many Indo-European cultures: examples are Dyaus pitar (Indic sky-god), Jupiter or Diespiter (Roman sky-god), the Germanic *Tiwaz (which lies behind our *Tues-day*), as well as the word for 'day' in Latin (*dies*) and the Greek word *eudia* ('good weather') (Burkert 1985: 125–6; Dowden 2006: 9–10, 2007: 48).

However, Zeus' 'true origin' as an Indo-European sky-god does not faithfully capture his character's development in historical times, when his assimilation into the contemporary storm-god figures of adjacent Mediterranean cultures is most salient. Zeus indeed shared with the Near Eastern storm-gods a similar place in what was a dominant mythical and theological structure: a 'succession of gods', in which the youngest generation of weather-gods overcomes the older gods and monstrous enemies and establishes a new order (López-Ruiz 2010: 84–129). Allegedly, Zeus' image as a storm-god who rides the clouds and wields lightning is more dominant than his image as a deity of the 'Day' or Sky'. He is the 'lightener' (*asteropetês*), and thunderbolts are the 'missiles/shafts of great Zeus' (Hes. *Theog*. 707–8). Zeus shares attributes, rank, iconographic and literary images with his counterparts, namely

Hurro-Hittite Teshub and Tarhun (Luwian Tarhunt), Mesopotamian Marduk, but perhaps especially with Canaanite Baal: in the Ugaritic texts Baal dwells on the summit of a mountain to the north, Mt Saphon (Mt Kasios for the Greeks), like Zeus on Olympos (Brown 2001: 47–9; Lane Fox 2008: 242–58), and his voice and weapons are thunder; Baal's sister Anat holds a prominent place in the pantheon (though not as his partner, like Hera); and he himself is the son of El/Ilu, a supreme older god, equated in antiquity with Cronus. One of Zeus' most common epithets is 'cloud-gatherer' (*nephelegereta*), which mirrors the epithet of Baal as the 'cloud-rider' (*rkb 'rpt*). In turn, similar epithets are used for the North-West Semitic storm-god Adad (Haddad), a variant of Baal, such as 'lord of lighting' or 'establisher of clouds' (West 1997: 115, 295, 400, n.55; Brown 2001: 145–7). The fact that Zeus was born and reared on Crete, according to the main tradition (Hes. *Theog*. 453–91), also situates him on an off-centre crossroads between the Near East and Greece. (For discussion of other non-Greek epithets of Zeus, see, in this volume, Bremmer, Chapter 40.)

In Greek literature and mythology, therefore, the personality and attributes of Zeus are far less determined by the Indo-European vertical (diachronic or genealogical) connection to a 'Bright Sky' or 'Day' deity than by the horizontal (synchronic or historical) line that connects him to the other Near Eastern heads of pantheons. Those were his true peers, in a network not unlike that of the city-state kings who partook in the eastern Mediterranean cultural and economic *koine* in the late Bronze Age, and who called each other 'brother'.

HERAKLES: A PAN-MEDITERRANEAN FIGURE

Even more than his father Zeus, Herakles is a character that resists clear classification as Indo-European. While the Greeks analysed his name as *Hera-kle(o)s*, having something to do with Hera and her 'glory' or 'fame' (*kleos*), this is probably an artificial etymology for what is most likely an

originally non-Greek name (Burkert 1985: 210). Born in Thebes from the union of Zeus with a mortal woman, his wanderings and colourful exploits made him a truly pan-Mediterranean hero, accepted on Olympos as a god after his death. Herakles absorbed the attributes and stories of many other local heroes and gods throughout the Mediterranean, and he might have originated from a non-Greek figure to begin with. It has been suggested, for instance, that Herakles stemmed from the chief Mesopotamian god of the Underworld, Nergal, who was also called Erakal and 'Lord of Erkalla (the Great City)'. Not only is Herakles quite at home in the Underworld in his several incursions there, but Nergal is often represented with a lion, bow, and club, like the Greek superhero. It is also evident that some motifs in Herakles' myths have precedents in the Near East, such as that of a hero fighting a seven-headed snaky monster (similar to the Hydra), which appears in Mesopotamian and Ugaritic iconography. The Babylonian god Marduk, in turn, fights and kills twelve enemies in the *Enuma Elish*, the same number as Herakles' labours (though this number also has independent astrological connotations). His similarities with Babylonian hero-king Gilgamesh are also remarkable. They were both partly assimilated to Nergal, they both killed monsters, and they both travelled to the edges of the known world and entered the Underworld. As with other figures discussed here, the Near Eastern features of the hero-god are not necessarily incompatible with his roots in Indo-European lore: for instance, the Vedic figure Indra or Trita fought a three-headed monster and carried away cattle that were hidden in a cave, a striking parallel to Herakles' capture of the cattle of the three-headed Geryon (for the comparative evidence, see Burkert 1979: 78–88; West 1997: 458–72). Herakles, therefore, is a good example of a pre-historic figure of 'agglutinating' characteristics, all contributing to his 'mythical DNA', as it were, rendering our linguistic and cultural demarcations obsolete.

APHRODITE: A CYPRO-PHOENICIAN GODDESS AND HER NAMES

The earliest extant account of the birth of Aphrodite is in Hesiod's *Theogony* 185–206, where she emerges from the foam produced by Ouranos' severed genitalia thrown into the sea after Cronus castrated him. Her birth by parthenogenesis from Ouranos (Sky), however, does not agree with the version in the Homeric poems, in which she is assumed to be the daughter of Zeus (she is called *dios thygater*), and in which her mother, mentioned in only one passage, is Dione (see section 'Greek Perceptions'; *Il*. 5.170–1; cf. also Apollod. *Bibl*. 1.3.1). Some scholars rely on Aphrodite's relationship to Zeus in Homer, and on comparative evidence, such as the Ushas of the Sanskrit hymns of the *Rig Veda*, to argue for her origin in an Indo-European Dawn-Goddess, who is known for her celestial connotations and her sensual beauty. A goddess such as this could have later bifurcated in Greek religion into two goddesses, Eos (Dawn) and Aphrodite (Cyrino 2010: 23–5). Following in Hesiod's footsteps, others have accepted the alleged link between Aphrodite's name and the Greek *aphros*, 'foam', and to an older Indo-European root for 'foam' or 'cloud' (cf. Indic **abrha*), to which the suffix *dj-* (same as in Greek *dios/dia*) would have been added, either related to 'brightness' or directly to the name of Zeus (Cyrino 2010: 26).

On the other hand, close connections were drawn already in antiquity between Aphrodite and the Phoenician Love-Goddess Ashtart (Gr. Astarte). This has led scholars to attempt to explain her name from the Semitic standpoint. It is possible, some postulate, that the name 'Aphrodite' was simply 'the way Greeks got their mouths around some form of the Phoenician goddess Astarte' (Dowden 2007: 48; cf. Cyrino 2010: 26). Relying on the goddess' association with Cyprus and the Phoenicians, Martin West (2000) has proposed connecting the name with a hypothetical Cypro-Phoenician cult title *prazit* (or the like), from a Canaanite word *prazi* 'country-town' ('Lady of the Villages'?). Be that as it may, the name is originally not Greek, and all other evidence points to Aphrodite's genesis in the Levant or Cyprus.

A constant in the figure of Aphrodite is the geographical connection with the islands of Cyprus and Cythera. This is reflected in her epithets Cypris and Cythereia, and the derived Cyprogeneia, 'born on Cyprus'. Hesiod, Homer, and the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* assume these connections, as do later authors (e.g. Hdt. 1.105.2–3). But it is Herodotos who introduces another important referent for Aphrodite's early history,

namely, her identification with the Phoenician Love- and Sex-Goddess Ashtart (cf. also Paus. 1.14.7). Thus, when the historian and ethnographer talks about the great antiquity of the temple of 'Heavenly Aphrodite' in Askalon, he remarks that it is 'the oldest of all the temples of the goddess, for even the temple in Cyprus originated from there'. Herodotos is referring to the temple of Phoenician Ashtart, which he then specifically ties with the Greek cult, adding, 'as for the one on Cythera, it was Phoenicians who founded it, who came from this same land of Syria' (Hdt. 1.105.3, my translation).

The two goddesses were identified early on, and, indeed, Phoenician Ashtart was exported to Cyprus, as attested epigraphically and archaeologically at Kition since the end of the ninth century BCE and later at Paphos (Lipinski 1992, s.v. Astarté). Her sanctuary and cult in that city achieved widespread fame well into Roman times (see e.g. Hom. *Od*. 8.362–3; *Hom. Hymn Aph*. 58–67; Paus.1.14.7; Diod. Sic. 5.75.5). The link between the goddess and Paphos is also reflected in the story of King Pygmalion (same as Phoenician Pumayyaton), who fell in love with a statue, which the goddess brought to life, and with whom he begot a daughter called Paphos (Ov. *Met*. 10.243–97).

The goddess' connection with Cythera, however, is more elusive. In his *Theogony* (192–6), Hesiod made the goddess stop first at Cythera and then arrive at her main religious centre on Cyprus. A temple dedicated to her and mentioned in later sources (Paus. 3.23.1) has been 'located tentatively' near the acropolis of the city of Cythera (Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007: 55), but a Phoenician foundation (as per Herodotos' testimony) cannot be ascertained, and it is not likely that her cult there predates the epithet. Again, a Levantine connection might be at play. Sometime before Hesiod, the Greeks may have adopted the name or title of a Phoenician goddess, formed after the Semitic Craftsman-God Kothar or Kuthar (cf. Ugaritic Kothar-wa-Hasis). This god was identified with Hephaistos in antiquity, which would explain the rare myth in which Aphrodite is Hephaistos' wife (*Od*. 8.266–366). This feminine divine title (Kuthariya or the like), in time, would have been re-analysed as Cythereia and reinterpreted as related to the island of Cythera (West 1997: 56–7).

Moreover, Aphrodite's association with Ouranos also points to a Phoenician connection. The goddess is commonly referred to and worshipped as 'Heavenly Aphrodite' (Ourania) in Greek epigraphical and

literary sources (e.g. Herodotos, Plato, Pausanias), an aspect that squarely matches the enthronement of Semitic Ashtart as 'Queen of Heaven' in the Levant. This characterization invited philosophical speculation about the existence of two different types of Aphrodite: a 'heavenly' one, representing sublime love, and a more earthly one, representing 'lower' sexual needs, including prostitution. The first one was Aphrodite Ourania and the second was called Pandemos, 'of all the people' (e.g. Pl. *Symp*. 180d) (see Rosenzweig 2004: chs 2 and 5). The Levantine 'vein' of Aphrodite also partly clarifies her connection with Adonis (e.g. Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.14.4; Ov. *Met*. 10.503–739). The 'dying and rising' youth and beloved of the goddess shares essential features with Babylonian Dumuzi/Tammuz (Burkert 1985: 177), and his cult flourished in Byblos and Cyprus (both within the Phoenician orbit), from where it was later adopted in Athens and Alexandria (Parker 1996: 160; cf. also Brown 1995: 245; West 1997: 57).

The ancient identification of Aphrodite with Semitic Ashtart explains some of the accents of the Love-Goddess, such as her occasional portrayal as 'Mistress of Beasts', as when she strides across Mount Ida with wild beasts in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* (68–74), and as a potential Warrior-Goddess (e.g. in Hom. *Il*. 5.352–430, where she is, however, scorned as unfit for battle). The Semitic goddess, indeed, encompassed these features, as did her counterparts, Mesopotamian Ishtar and Egyptian Isis. But the realms of the wild and weapons were, in Greece, usually allocated to the figures of Artemis and Athena. Furthermore, the ancient belief that there existed institutionalized sacred prostitution at Aphrodite's sanctuaries in Corinth (mentioned only by Strabo 8.6.21 (C 379)) may also derive from her general identification with Near Eastern sex-goddesses, whose temples included prostitutes, as noted by ancient sources (e.g. Shamhat in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablets I–II; Hdt. 1.199; Euseb. *Vit. Const*. 3.55, 3.58). Once more, Cyprus might provide the missing link, since the cult of the Greek and Semitic goddess overlaps there. Finally, Aphrodite shares with Ashtart the protection of seafarers (Aphrodite is called Limenia, Euploia, Pontia, etc.) and with doves, among other things (see West 1997: 56–7 and Budin 2003).

We may close the discussion on Aphrodite by revisiting Hesiod's 'birth story' (*Theog*. 189–200) in light of the above factors. The main components of his account, namely, her descent from Ouranos, her

emergence from the foam around his genitals, and her connections with the two islands, seem to be deliberate explanations of her already obscure or misunderstood name and epithets, and how they relate to her birth, the geography of her cult, and her personality. The epithet Cythereia, whatever its origins, was, by Hesiod's time, understood as pertaining to the island of Cythera, while Aphrodite's connection with Cyprus was prominent and historically accurate. The name 'Aphrodite' was obscure to the Greek speakers, so its resemblance to 'foam' (*aphros*) was creatively mythologized by Hesiod (or others before him). Her birth from Ouranos was probably a way of integrating her title Ourania, 'Heavenly', within the theogonic scheme, while the explanation of her parthenogenesis through the severed genitals in the sea allowed for an ingenious integration of the 'foam' etymology and her connections with the sea, and even for a pun on genitals and flirtatious smiles (*Theog*. 200). In other words, Hesiod tries to resolve poetically the thorny questions about origins that the modern scholar tries to resolve scientifically; all the while both theories remain quite removed from historical (or prehistorical) origins.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that, even when a hypothesis is advanced about the origins of a god's name, myth, or cult, we should avoid taking up an essentialist or reductionist position. Such a position would, for instance, ascribe for Zeus either an exclusively Indo-European cachet, or an exclusively Near Eastern one, or would see Aphrodite as a Phoenician goddess above all. Even knowing the layers of both Indo-European and Near Eastern aspects that formed the gods' characters, both figures were ultimately as Greek as Greek could be, because being 'Greek' *encompassed* precisely the kind of cross-cultural contact that produced such complex figures. The Greeks not only appropriated foreign elements and integrated them in their own discourse of cultural identity, but also hyper-characterized elements of their culture as 'foreign' even when they were strictly not, or when they had been well integrated into their religious landscape. Gods such as

Dionysos and Aphrodite are good examples of the productive ambivalence of this self-conscious exoticism.

All in all, there are multiple ways in which modern scholars might hypothesize a god's origins. The Greeks' own perception of their gods can be scrutinized through historiographical and literary testimonies, while independent, modern conclusions might be reached through historical linguistics, archaeological evidence, inscriptions, iconography, comparative mythology and literature, and anthropology. Our knowledge of the early history of the Greek gods will advance only through the collaboration and debate among different disciplines and methodologies. And even so, as the cases discussed in this chapter show, we can reach only partial and composite views about the Greek gods, which do not necessarily do justice to the local and synchronic perception of a god or goddess.

Suggested Reading

For general topics and authors, consult entries in *OCD* and *NP*. For early iconography of the gods, consult *LIMC* and Gantz 1993. For Linear B and origins, see Rougemont 2005, Bremmer 2010a: 2–6. For a compendium of Indo-European mythological and poetic motifs, see West 2009. A basic source for Greek religion is still Burkert 1985, but Parker 2011 offers new perspectives. Parker 1996 is a thorough study of Athenian religion, with chapter 9 focusing on the introduction of new gods. On the gods, see also essays in Bremmer and Erskine 2010. For divine personifications in the Greek world, consult Stafford and Herrin 2005. Recent studies of several gods have appeared in the Routledge series 'Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World', bringing up to date the scholarly discussion about Zeus (Dowden 2006), Dionysos (Seaford 2006), Athena (Deacy 2008), Apollo (Graf 2009), Aphrodite (Cyrino 2010), and Herakles (Stafford 2012).

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CHAPTER 26

HEROES—LIVING OR DEAD?

GUNNEL EKROTH

INTRODUCTION: DEAD BUT DIVINE

A Greek hero had been a living character, either in myth or reality, but only once dead did his career as a cult recipient begin. After death the hero could interact with the living, help and grant requests, or become angry and dangerous and be in need of appeasement. Heroes could even manifest physically among the living and, in this sense, a hero had a life after death. Such circumstances affect the relation of heroes to gods, the ordinary dead, and their worshippers, but also our perception of these beings. For an ancient Greek, this issue would probably have been irrelevant, but modern scholarship has to grapple with the fact that heroes encompass aspects of both immortality and mortality, and are connected to both gods and men.

The ancient evidence for hero-cults consists of literary sources, inscriptions, archaeological evidence, and iconography (Ekroth 2007). To begin with, modern scholarship was indiscriminate in its use of sources for the study of hero cult. Information derived from Greek, Roman, and Byzantine authors, as well as scholia, lexicographers, and grammarians were mixed up, with little consideration of differences in time and

character of the sources, or of the changes that may have taken place, producing a skewed image of heroes and their cults. The increasing incorporation of epigraphical and archaeological evidence has led to a re-evaluation of the often static and standardized image presented in modern handbooks, and recognition of the rich diversity and continuous developments of heroes and their cults.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEATH

The overriding concerns in the study of Greek heroes have been the role of death in the perception of these figures, and how to orient heroes between gods and ordinary mortals. Traditionally, hero-cults have been assumed to have developed from the cult of the dead, an origin affecting both cult practices and the nature of the heroes. If being dead was the only criterion for understanding and defining heroes the issue would be simple, as heroes are dead while gods are not. However, the mode of burial, the ritual attention heroes got, and the fact that they were regarded as being able to interact with the living show that heroes have as much in common with the gods as with the regular dead.

The modern understanding of heroes as linked to the deceased and the Underworld ties in with another major discussion within the study of Greek religion, the Olympian–chthonian paradigm (see this, in volume, Deacy, Chapter 24). The location of heroes in the chthonian category has dominated the interpretation of hero-cults (Stengel 1920: 105–55; Farnell 1921; Burkert 1985 [1977]: 205; Scullion 1994; Scullion 2000). The questioning of this model and its value for hero-cults (and for Greek religion in general) lies at the centre of the modern debate surrounding Greek heroes, while the chthonian character of heroes and their cults has been shown to be a result of an uncritical application of the literary sources (Schlesier 1991–1992; Ekroth 2002).

The nature of heroes, the questions of who became one and how, as well as the use and meaning of the term *heros* have been debated. A hero can be defined as a person who has lived and died, either in myth or in real life. This constitutes the difference between a hero and a god, who is immortal

(although there are traditions of certain gods having tombs, such as Zeus and Dionysos). A hero usually had a tomb, which could be the focus of a cult, though some heroes were thought simply to have disappeared from the surface of the earth. The distinction between a hero and an ordinary dead person lay in the notice paid to heroes after death; they attracted attention on a more public level. The worshippers usually did not have a personal connection to heroes, unlike in the case of the ordinary deceased who were looked after by their immediate family. The hero was also a local phenomenon worshipped at one particular location, while gods were Panhellenic, though certain heroes had a geographical spread recalling that of gods. The fluidity of the hero concept is illustrated by Herakles (Verbanck-Piérard 1989; Lévêque and Verbanck-Piérard 1992). Born a mortal, living the spectacular life of a mythical hero with immortal qualities, he finally burnt himself to death on Mount Oite and joined the gods on Olympos. There is no tradition of a tomb and his worship was spread all over Greek territory, still his cult had traits clearly linked to the cult of the dead. This complexity was certainly recognized in antiquity (cf. Hdt. 2.44) and Pindar even calls him a *heros theos*, a 'hero god' (*Nem.* 3.22).

There is no watertight distinction between the use of the terms *heros* and *theos*. Certain figures with a Classical heroic background were called *theos*, such as the athlete Theogenes from Thasos (Paus. 6.11.2–9), while the Athenian healing hero Heros Iatros is designated *theos* in an inscription listing his property (*IG* II^2 839). The reasons behind the denomination are difficult to grasp and may have depended on the perception of a figure's stature in the eyes of the worshippers (cf. *IG* II^2 2499 and 2501, decrees of two Athenian cult associations for the *heros* Egretes and the *theos* Hypodektes, respectively). A distinction between gods, heroes, and the ordinary dead is evident in Greek mentality, as these three categories are often referred to when presenting the beings that are to receive ritual attention and honours (e.g. Pl. *Resp*. 427b and *Leg*. 717a–b).

Heroes are, as a rule, grown males, usually kings, warriors, or individuals with a leading position in society, but the presence and function of female heroes or heroines or even child and baby heroes have recently been noted (Larson 1995; Lyons 1997; Pache 2004: 95–134). Some heroes may originally have been gods who had diminished in importance, though most heroes originated in myth or epic and were also

historical characters, such as founders of cities, athletes, like Theagenes from Thasos, soldiers killed in war, like the Spartan general Brasidas, while poets, for example Homer, could be heroized. To these figures with a documented history can be added heroes only known from cultic contexts with little or no biographical information. Early twentieth-century scholarship tried to categorize heroes to create some order, an attempt largely abandoned today (Pfister 1909–1912; Farnell 1921). Even the more recent distinction between heroes of myth or epic and heroes of cult has been questioned (Currie 2005: 67–70).

ORIGINS: WHEN AND WHY?

The origin of hero-cults can be explained differently whether texts, inscriptions, or archaeology are used. Heroes as cultic figures seem to post-date the Bronze Age, but when and why during the Iron Age they arose remains debated. The term *Tiriseroe* is found in the Linear B tablets (Rougemont 2005: 338 and 374), but it is unclear if it has any cultic connotations. *Heros* occurs in Homer for major kings, warriors, and ordinary persons, though never for figures receiving cult. Homer's usage suggests that hero-cults are later than the epics, or that Homer may have been aware of hero-cults but consciously suppressed them (Hadzisteliou-Price 1973). A cultic use of *heros* is found in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (157–68), where the heroes are one of the four races and are also called demi-gods, while the earliest epigraphic use of *heros* as a figure receiving cult dates from the early sixth century BCE (Dubois 1989: 25–7, no. 20).

The matching of the written sources with the archaeological evidence is complex. A group of shrines archaeologically attested in the eighth century BCE is identified from later inscribed dedications as belonging to heroes: Helen and Menelaos at Sparta, Odysseus in the Polis cave on Ithaka, and Agamemnon at Mycenae. As the epigraphical evidence post-dates the earliest cult activity by at least a hundred years we are faced with a methodological dilemma: Was the cult recipient always the same or was identification with an epic or mythic hero made later? The rise of hero-cults has also been linked to eighth-century BCE dedications of pottery,

figurines, and metals in Mycenaean tombs. These deposits include both offerings and new burials and have been interpreted as hero-cults, tomb cults, or cults of ancestors (Coldstream 1976; Antonaccio 1995; Boehringer 2001). Some of the richer and more long-lived deposits may be hero-cults, such as Menidi in Attica and Berbati in the Argolid, while offerings of a few pots are likely to represent tomb cults (Antonaccio 1995; Ekroth 1996).

The distinction between a hero and a regular dead person is tricky, as some burials and funerary cults are both rich and long-lived. The monumental mid-eleventh-century BCE apsidal building at Toumba, Lefkandi, housing a cremated man, an inhumed woman, two horses, and rich burial gifts has been called a *heröon*, but there is no evidence for a continuous cult although new burials were made around the mound, covering the building at a later stage (Popham 1993: 98–9). Some burials received attention that clearly surpassed that given to the tombs of the ordinary departed. At the West gate at Eretria, for example, a group of rich late eighth-century BCE cremation burials were marked by a triangular enclosure around 680 BCE, followed by a series of buildings used for cult (Bérard 1970). The origins of hero-cults seem impossible to pinpoint, and it is more fruitful to see heroes as a gradually developing category that came to encompass beings of different origins corresponding to various needs and contexts (Parker 1996: 39).

The rise of hero-cults has been explained by the spread of Homer and Hesiod, triggering the identification of Bronze Age tombs with the burials of the epic and mythic heroes (Coldstream 1976). The dedications of Geometric material in Mycenaean tombs coincide with the rise of the polis state and have been explained as a way for aristocratic families, individual farmers, or smaller communities to stake claims to the land (Antonaccio 1995; Boehringer 2001). In the Classical period and later, many cults were instituted by the oracle at Delphi. A community would consult Delphi due to a crisis, such as disease or crop failure, and the oracle would identify an unjustly killed and revengeful figure who had to be placated by a cult in order to make the problems disappear (Bohringer 1979; Visser 1982).

THE HEROIZATION OF THE RECENTLY DEAD

Historical figures could become heroes. The question remains for us modern scholars is if a cult recipient has explicitly to be called *heros* for the identification to be made. The Marathonomachoi, the men who fell at Marathon, were buried on the battlefield and the city of Athens annually performed games in their honour, treatment clearly exceeding that of the ordinary dead. Still, they are not called heroes in the Classical sources, only by later authors (Paus. 1.32.4), and the first clear-cut evidence for a cult dates to the end of the second century BCE (*IG* II^2 1006.69). In scholarship there is a certain reluctance to recognize the war dead as actual heroes (Loraux 1986: 39–41; Parker 1996: 132–7; Currie 2005: 89–119).

On Hellenistic and Roman gravestones, the term *heros* becomes more widely used, while tombs are labelled *heroa* (Kubinska 1968: 26–31). New phenomena of the Hellenistic period are the private cult foundations and monumental burial monuments, pointing to the presence of hero-cults for the ordinary dead with a certain economic standing (Laum 1914; Fedak 1990; Kader 1995). Such practices have been dismissed by scholars as a result of the decline of Greek religion in the Hellenistic period, when the hero concept had become trivialized, but recent work has shown the complexity of these developments (Hughes 1999; Jones 2010; Wypustek 2013). The designation of someone as *heros*, and the recognition of this status through cultic acts, are not to be regarded as the same thing. Used for the ordinary dead, the term *heros* usually only suggested hopes and beliefs for the departed, a kind of blessing, and was often applied to those who died young (Wypustek 2013: 65–95). The actual honours accorded to the ordinary dead also varied from a public funeral, and might include a public burial, a tomb within the city (on the *agora* or in the gymnasium), the performance of sacrifices, as well as the establishment of an actual cult (Fröhlich 2013). The diversity in use with regard to terminology and actions suggests that the concept of hero-cults had become more multifaceted, probably reflecting altered circumstances and needs within contemporary society. The fluidity of the system is shown by the fact that

some living individuals were already called *heros* or even *theos* in the Classical period, while, in the Hellenistic period, living kings could be proclaimed gods by the polis or by themselves (Habicht 1970; in this volume, Petrovic, Chapter 29). The extension of the hero concept to encompass the ordinary and recently dead finds its final development in the modern (and disputed) suggestion that living individuals had already received heroic honours in their lifetime (Currie 2005).

CULTIC EXPRESSIONS

The sacrificial rituals of hero-cults have traditionally been defined as consisting of a complete destruction of the animal victim by fire (holocaust), libations of blood, and the offering of prepared meals, rituals distinct from the sacrifices to the gods, which were centred on the consumption of the victim's meat (Stengel 1920: 105–55; Farnell 1921; Burkert 1985 [1977]: 205; Scullion 1994, 2000). By considering a wider range of evidence (epigraphical, iconographic, and archaeological, as well as textual) and adopting a more critical awareness of the date of the sources and changes over time, scholars have instead shown that the main ritual of hero-cults was a *thysia* sacrifice ending with a meal, just as in the cult of the gods (Nock 1944 [1972]; Verbank-Piérard 2000; Ekroth 2002).

Ancient Greek communities seem to have manifested their local identity through the physical appearances of hero-cults, while the cult places of the gods, especially the peripteral temples, shared a similar, more generally recognizable appearance. The remarkable variation among hero-cult places is probably one reason why there have been few attempts to collect the archaeological evidence (Abramson 1978; Pariente 1992). Smaller precincts with little architecture are often labelled hero-cults because they are considered too small to be cult places for gods (Kearns 1992). Epigraphical or literary evidence provides a more certain means of identification, though the mention of a hero or a cult in fictional works does not necessarily have to correspond to an actual cult (Ekroth 2003). The presence of tombs is a less certain marker, since it has to be ascertained that the worshippers were aware of these burials at the

institution of the cult. The power of the hero resided in his bones, and examples of this circumstance are the transferal of the bones of Theseus to Athens from Syros by Kimon in 476/5 BCE (Plut. *Thes*. 36 and *Cim.* 8) and the bones of Orestes to Sparta (Hdt. 1.66–8), which assured the support of these heroes for these communities. Such 'traffic in bones' has been interpreted by scholars as politically motivated propaganda rather than expressions of religious belief, perhaps a too rational assessment (McCauley 1999).

CASE STUDIES

Pelops at Olympia

The cult of Pelops at Olympia was one of the most famous hero-cults of Greek antiquity, due to the cult's location at one of the largest, oldest, and most visited sanctuaries, and to the recipient's prominence in Panhellenic myth. Studies of Pelops have largely focused on him being the opposite of Zeus, underlining the distinctions hero-god as well as mortality–immortality, making a classic case for an Olympian–chthonian reading of the situation (Farnell 1921: 357e; Burkert 1983 [1972]). Pelops has been seen as gloomy and uncanny, qualities prominent in his mythical biography and perhaps due to him being chopped up, boiled, and served to the gods by his father Tantalos and partly eaten by Demeter, before being brought back to life equipped with an ivory shoulder (Burkert 1983 [1972]).

Due to his prominent mythical pedigree, Pelops' cult has been considered to be very old, antedating that of Zeus at Olympia (Dörpfeld 1935: 26–8 and 119–22; Herrmann 1980). It has been argued that the Olympic Games originated in the funeral games for this dead hero or were instituted in his honour, a hypothesis backed up by the great number of tripods found at the site, thought to have been prizes in the early competitions (Burkert 1983 [1972]; Nagy 1986: 79–80).

The late nineteen-century archaeological investigations at Olympia revealed, in the northern part of the Altis, an extensive layer of ash, charcoal, animal bones, and broken votives (the Black Layer or *schwarze Schicht*), marking the earliest cult activity (Furtwängler 1890: 2–4; Mallwitz 1988; Kyrieleis 2006). The oldest components date to *c*.1050 BCE, while the latest suggest a levelling of the layer around *c*.600 BCE. The new excavations in the 1980s and 1990s have demonstrated that Pelops' sanctuary was centred on a prehistoric mound, dating from the Early Helladic period (*c*.2500 BCE) (Kyrieleis 2002, 2006; Rambach 2002). There are no Mycenaean layers and no cult continuity can be demonstrated from the Bronze Age into the Iron Age. The Early Helladic mound may have attracted the first worshippers to Olympia in the mid-eleventh century BCE, but there is no indication that the original recipient of the cult was anyone else but Zeus. The cult of Pelops was introduced at the end of the Archaic period, perhaps as late as around 500 BCE (Kyrieleis 2006: 55–61). This date concurs with the earliest written evidence for a cult of Pelops, Pindar's first *Olympian Ode* (476 BCE), where the poet's description of the worship of the hero is initiated by the word 'now', perhaps suggesting a recent establishment.

When the cult of Pelops was added to the cult of Zeus, always the main deity of the sanctuary and the festival, the Early Helladic tumulus may have been identified as the tomb of Pelops (Pindar speaks of his ancient tomb, *Ol*. 10.24–5; Ekroth 2012). The institution of the cult can be seen as part of a wider trend where all prestigious sanctuaries, and especially those with Panhellenic games, were to have a particular hero in their midst. The cult of Pelops may have been inspired by the situation at Nemea, where the child hero Opheltes/Archemoros was worshipped from the early sixth century BCE (Bravo 2006: 216–27). A further reason for the promotion of Pelops could have been the political agenda of Elis, the city-state in whose territory Olympia lies, trying to strengthen its manifestation in the sanctuary. The new Temple of Zeus (495–450 BCE) depicted on its eastern pediment Pelops about to race Oinomaos, an iconography that launched Pelops as the national founding hero of the Elean polis, similar to Theseus at Athens (Kyrieleis 1997, 2006: 79–83).

The identification of the Pelopion is based on Pausanias' description (5.31.1) and confirmed by a sherd inscribed [P]ELOPS found next to the precinct wall (Kyrieleis 2006: 15). Pelops' bones were of great interest in

antiquity, in particular his ivory shoulder blade, which was sent to help the Greeks at Troy, but lost at sea and finally recovered by a fisherman (Paus. 5.13.4–7). The Classical *propylon* and wall around the precinct were perhaps constructed to prevent the bones from being stolen, in particular if Pelops, during that period, was the national hero of Elis (Ekroth 2012). When Pausanias visited Olympia in the second century CE, the bones were no longer kept in the Pelopion and the shoulder blade had been lost (5.13.6, 6.22.1).

The cult of Pelops has been seen as the prime example of the chthonian character of hero worship, distinct from the cult of gods (Herrmann 1980: 62–3; Burkert 1983 [1972]; Nagy 1986: 77–81). In an influential discussion of Pelops, Walter Burkert has argued for a distinction between the dark, uncanny Pelops, connected to the impure dead and the Underworld, and the bright, friendly Zeus, god of the sky (Burkert 1983 [1972]). This interpretation of the cult rests on a mixture of our two main written sources, Pindar and Pausanias. It does not take into account possible changes over time or that the image provided by Pausanias is difficult to reconcile with the role of Pelops within the festival of Zeus at Olympia in the Classical period.

Pindar's account in the first *Olympian Ode* (90–3) has been interpreted as evoking a cult where the hero is given blood from animal victims who are subsequently burnt, a ritual with no communal meal for the worshippers. However, a closer reading and analysis of the vocabulary results in a sacrifice where the hero reclines as at a banquet, being offered blood as a means to attract and invigorate him, and honoured with *theoxenia*, a ritual in which a deity was invited as the guest of honour and presented with a couch on which to recline on and a table with food and drink (Gerber 1982: 141–5; Ekroth 2002: 171–2, 178, 190–2). The passage further presents Pelops as an attentive and magnanimous host presiding over the distribution and communal consumption of the meat from the sacrifices to himself and to Zeus, a ritual that formed the centrepiece of the festival (Ekroth 2012: 107–11). This interpretation is supported by the location of the Pelopion. It is situated in the area of the Altis where sacrificial meat was distributed, and it faces the grounds outside the *temenos* where the visitors put up their tents and prepared and ate their meals (cf. Pind. *Ol*. 10.45–6).

The view of Pelops as a sinister hero not inviting his worshippers to any communal meat consumption derives from second-century CE Pausanias (5.13.1–7). According to this source, the sacrificial victim was a black ram, from which the woodcutter providing the fuel for the sacrifices was given the neck, while the *mantis* ('seer') received no share at all. The most important feature of Pelops' cult was that consumption of the meat rendered those eating it impure and banned them from the Temple of Zeus and the cult of the god. This is a very different Pelops from Pindar's friendly host.

Pausanias' statement has frequently been drawn upon for reconstructing the cult of Pelops during earlier periods, and has also been merged with the account of Pindar (cf. Burkert 1983 [1972]). Moreover, the polluting capacities of Pelops' sacrificial meat have become the cornerstone of the notion that participation in heroic cults instigated pollution, and that therefore the victims were burnt in holocausts. But the evidence for hero-cults causing pollution is confined to this particular passage in Pausanias. However, in the Roman period there was a tendency to perceive heroes as more linked to the dead and the Underworld than previously, a perception reflected also in cult practices (Ekroth 1999, 2002: 121–8). There is a stronger emphasis on the burning of offerings. The only archaeologically attested holocaust in a hero-cult is, in fact, Roman, the cult of Palaimon at Isthmia (Gebhard 1993).

The differences between the accounts of Pindar and Pausanias suggest that the cult of Pelops did not remain the same from the Classical to the Roman Imperial period. One important difference concerns the handling of the meat and, in particular, the fact that, according to Pausanias, consumption rendered those eating it impure and banned them from any contact with Zeus. The sacrifice to Pelops took place in the middle of the five-day Olympic festival before the major sacrifice to Zeus, and the impure qualities of the meat from Pelops' victim would have barred all athletes from participating in the religious highlight of the festival the following day. Such a scenario seems highly unlikely. The cult of Pelops must rather have undergone substantial changes between the fifth century BCE and the second century CE, and perhaps in the Roman period, Pelops had become less linked to the actual festival and the games.

This changed role of Pelops also affects the traditions surrounding the founding of the Olympian Games, usually seen as originating in the

funerary games for the hero, adding another chthonian dimension to the cult. The antiquity of the games has been supported by the presence of tripods and cauldrons in the Black Layer, assumed by modern scholars to be the prizes in the contests and therefore constituting links to Pelops' mythic history (Burkert 1983 [1972]; Krummen 1990: 168–83). New excavations have demonstrated that the cult of Pelops post-dates the distribution of the Black Layer, which took place around 600 BCE. Therefore, the tripods and cauldrons cannot connect Pelops' cult to the origins of the games nor indicate that he is the recipient of the games. The earliest ancient traditions name both Herakles and Pelops as founders of the games, while the recipient always is Zeus (Pind. *Ol*. 10.24–5; Paus. 5.7.6–8.5). It is not until the second century CE that the games are seen as originating in the funerary games for the dead hero, a development which is in line with the general trends of hero-cults in the Roman period.

Aleximachos on Amorgos

The young hero Aleximachos, from the Aegean island of Amorgos, constitutes a very different case from Pelops. He was not a mythical figure but a contemporary deceased person elevated to the status of a hero by his family and community. If the case of Pelops allows us to examine the possible Bronze Age origins of hero-cults, and the relation between heroes and gods, the cult of Aleximachos throws light on the heroization of the recently dead and how their hero status was expressed in cult in the Hellenistic period. Our knowledge of Aleximachos comes from one extensive inscription dated to the late second century BCE (*IG* XII, 7 515; Laum 1914: no. 50; Gauthier 1980; Helmis 2003). The document finds parallels in the corpus of Hellenistic cult foundations (Laum 1914: no. 43, cf. nos 45, 117) and can be related to the elaborate funerary monuments of this period, which bridge the divide between hero-cults and grave cults (Fedak 1990; Kader 1995).

Aleximachos was a young man from a prominent local family who, after his death, became 'heroized' (*apheroismos*, *IG* XII, 7 515.6), a terminology suggesting an elevation to the status of *heros*, marking him as distinct from the ordinary dead. The inscription does not explicitly mention that he is dead or his tomb. There is a strong link between the

living and the dead Aleximachos, and many of the participants in the cult must have known him when he was alive. This fluidity between the mortal and immortal Aleximachos is evident from the fact that, at the games, he was to be awarded the first prize in the *pankration* without any competition (lines 83–4). This may have been the sport in which he excelled or perhaps it caused his demise, as casualties were not unheard of in this event.

The initiative for Aleximachos' elevation to a hero came from his father Kritolaos, who bequeathed 2000 drachmas, 10 per cent of the interest of which was to pay for the cult. The foundation was a gift to the city of Aigale, which passed a new law establishing and regulating the cult and its finances. The reason for the institution of Aleximachos' cult is not stated but it may have been a result of a father's grief over a son who died young. The inscription also lays down the practical execution of the rituals: a procession, animal sacrifice, a public meal, and athletic games (lines 39–86). The officials elected to be in charge of the cult were to lead the procession, which included members of the city council, the *gymnasiarch* (the director of the gymnasium), the ephebes, as well as all of the other young men of the city; the *gymnasiarch* was even allowed to force people to participate. The sacrificial victim was an ox, which was led from the *prytaneion* (lines 42–6). Its meat was cooked 'whole' (*holomele*), suggesting that no share was given to a priest. This meant that all of it was available for consumption, and was served at a meal (*demothoinia* or *deipnon*). Each ephebe was given a portion of pork, either instead of meat from the ox or in addition to it. Wood, water, oil, a sweet honey drink, dessert, and flowers were to be provided by the officials, and the participants were also given an allotment of grain the day before the sacrifice. A second sacrifice, this time of a ram, was performed at Aleximachos' statue at a later stage, and the terminology implies that the animal's blood was poured out as a libation (74–81). The ram was boiled whole, and the meat, along with a dish made of grain, were deposited in front of the statue, suggesting a *theoxenia* ritual for the hero. At the games that followed the next day, all of the ram's meat and half of the grain dish were used as prizes for the athletes, the rest was kept by the officials.

The sacrificial meal took place in the gymnasium, and presumably this was also where Aleximachos' statue was raised, although there is no mention of a particular precinct for him or a grave. The inscription only

concerns the public part of the cult, that is, the law passed by the *demos*, so the family must have constructed a funerary monument elsewhere which housed the burial. Other cult foundation decrees mention funerary monuments as well as cult buildings and statues, for example, the explicit late third- early second-century testament of Epikteta from the island of Thera, which speaks about *heroa* (Laum 1914: vol. 2, no. 43). Elaborate funerary complexes with installations for sacrifices, libations, and dining were part of the Hellenistic landscape of hero-cults. For example, the Charmyleion on Kos (early third century BCE) was a two-storey building with libation tubes into the burial chamber (Schazmann 1934; Sherwin-White 1977: 207–17), while the second-century BCE *heröon* at Kalydon consisted of a walled courtyard with dining rooms and a central hall for worship located above the founder's tomb (Dyggve, Poulsen, and Rhomaios 1934).

The games were a central part of the cult of Aleximachos but there is no indication of them being seen as his funeral games. Rather, the decree emphasizes Aleximachos' hero-cult persona as an athlete, one of a category of individuals who, quite frequently, were raised to heroic status (Bohringer 1979; Currie 2005). Aleximachos was proclaimed the winner in the *pankration*, the ram slaughtered at his statue was used as prizes for the contests and the officials, the ephebes and the youths crowned him (i.e. his statue) at the games due to his virtue and discipline (100–3).

The cult of Aleximachos bridges private and public spheres in a complex manner. It commemorates a family member by integrating him into the official cultic sphere and awarding him a hero-cult as for a mythic hero. That he was an ordinary dead person is irrelevant: he is honoured at his statue, and not at his grave, not only by the community at large, but also by his family. The importance of establishing the cult in the communal arena is evident from the fact that citizens of Aigale, resident immigrants, passing foreigners, and even Romans could take part in the public meal. In the procession, the games, and the torch race, state officials, adult men, youths, and boys were not only expected to participate, they could even be forced to do so.

CONCLUSION

The perception of Greek heroes changed over time, to a much higher degree than did the perception of the gods. The term *heros* underwent a shift from a figure of epic, though not necessarily an exceptional one, to a specific type of cult recipient, finally becoming a denomination signalling honour and prestige for public accomplishments. To the figures of myth and cult prominent among the heroes of the Archaic and Classical periods were added contemporary individuals of exceptional achievements. In Hellenistic times, ordinary private persons could be proclaimed as heroes by the community or their family in connection with their burial. The importance of 'death' for the definition of a hero also varied over time. At all periods it was essential for the cult of mythic heroes that there was a grave and bones, but this was less so for the recently heroized of the Hellenistic period. This changed again in the Roman period, when the emphasis on heroes, even mythic figures, as being dead, became more pronounced. The rituals of hero-cults are more consistent through time, focusing on animal sacrifice and communal consumption of meat, and underlining the importance of heroes for the cohesion of a group, be it a family, an association, a local community, or a city.

The two case studies show similarities and it is possible that the ritual practices of the cult of Aleximachos were modelled on the cult of Pelops. If Pelops is seen as the athletic victor par excellence, this could have inspired the construction of the hero-cult of Aleximachos. A libation of blood to the hero was part of both cults, as was the sacrifice of a ram (at least in Pausanias' time for Pelops). Both also included a *theoxenia* ceremony in the ritual: Pelops is invited as an honoured guest, while the food to be used as prizes in the games at Aigale are placed in front of Aleximachos' statue. Moreover, Aleximachos, just as Pelops, watched over the distribution of meat to the participants in the procession and the games as well as over their joint meal, in a sense acting as the host.

But the differences between the two cults are just as important, especially the extent to which each cult brings out the dead or living qualities of each hero. Pelops has a tomb and his bones are important elements of his story and cult, while in Aleximachos' case there is no mention of a grave, only a statue, and the proclamation of him as the victor of the *pankration* ascribes him living capacities or evokes his activities while still alive. The cult of Pelops may not always have been

open for all to participate in, contrary to that of Aleximachos, whose cult strove to embrace the community as a whole, even foreigners. The worship of Pelops was truly long-lived, from the late sixth or early fifth century BCE to the second century CE. For Aleximachos we do not know, as the evidence is one inscription alone. The fact that the cult was given to the city even though it was a private initiative by his father shows the intent to assure the memory of Aleximachos for the future, in a manner never needed for Pelops.

Suggested Reading

An outline of hero-cult topics is found in Hägg 1999; see also the recent overview article by Ekroth 2007. For the question of heroes as dead or alive, the issue of sacrificial rituals is central; see Ekroth 2002 and Verbanck-Piérard 2000. The recent proposal that hero-cults were also for the living is expounded by Currie 2005. The debate on the origins of hero-cults in the Iron Age is found principally in Antonaccio 1995 and Boehringer 2001. Selective collections of cult places have been made by Abramson 1978 and Pariente 1992; for the plethora of heroes of Attica, see Kearns 1989. For the heroization of the recently dead, see Jones 2010, Wypustek 2013, and Fröhlich 2013, see also Wörrle and Zanker 1995, revealing the complexity of such practices in the Hellenistic period.

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CHAPTER 27

DEAD OR ALIVE?

EMMANUEL VOUTIRAS

INTRODUCTION

HUMAN beings individually, and human societies collectively, have always had considerable difficulty in dealing with the phenomenon of death, the inescapable end of every living being, which is as inexplicable as it is irreversible. The feeling of being powerless in the face of the certain yet unforeseeable end of life is a source of anxiety and fear. Death is perceived as the instantaneous end of a process—short or long, depending on the cause—leading to a sudden collapse of all vital functions that make life possible (Donnadieu and Villatte 1996: 55–6). As a consequence, the human body ceases to move and to react, it becomes inert, cold, and rigid, and after a while it begins to decompose. It is as though an invisible power which kept a person alive and helped him (or her) to interact with the environment suddenly left the body and disappeared into the air. This power has been called the ‘free soul’, which ‘is the individual’s nonphysical mode of existence’ and ‘is always active outside the body’, in contrast with the body souls that ‘are active during the waking life of the living individual’ (Bremmer 1983: 17–18).

The idea of a life-giving power residing inside the human body for as long as it is alive and abandoning it at the moment of death is found in many cultures and can therefore be considered universal. This vital power, which, though constantly present, does not manifest itself during one's lifetime, is what we call 'the soul', and it is perceived as taking a concrete form only at the moment of death, when it leaves the body. It may, for example, be envisaged as a bird or a butterfly flying away from the dying person. In the Greek language the notion of 'soul' appears very early in the simple form we have just outlined; it is expressed by the word *psyche* (deriving from the verb *psychein*, 'to breathe'), which is present already in the Homeric poems. In Greek thought this primitive idea of the soul remained central (Luck-Huyse 1997: 157–71), but it was eventually taken up and developed into a more elaborate one by the Orphic–Pythagorean sects (Turcan 1959). In any case, it is important to keep in mind that this view was gradually transformed into a philosophical concept—thanks to the contribution of important thinkers, who, to a large extent, influenced the formation of our modern complex concept of the soul with its psychological and eschatological attributes (Bremmer 1983: 3).

VIEWS OF THE AFTERLIFE AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE DEAD

We must bear in mind, however, that the meaning of *psyche* underwent considerable change in the course of antiquity and, furthermore, that it does not coincide with that of the word 'soul' as we use it today, but is in fact narrower (Bremmer 1983, ch. 1; see also Jaeger 1960: 288f.). For the Greeks of the Homeric age, *psyche* represents, first of all, the individual personality; it is the element that distinguishes the living person from the dead corpse (*soma*) and continues to exist after a person has died. In the beginning of the *Iliad* (1.3) the poet states that the wrath of Achilles sent many strong *psychai* of heroes to Hades (the realm of the dead), whereas they themselves (*autoi*), in other words their corpses, were left to the dogs and the vultures to devour. It is therefore not surprising that *psyche* is

often used with the meaning of 'life' (see Snell 1931: 77–8). It has been argued that this is the principal meaning of the word *psyche* in Homer (Otto 1958: 25–31). Thus, in the *Odyssey* (22.245) the suitors fight for their lives (*peri psycheon*). But one should be careful to distinguish *psyche* from other vital powers that are also believed to reside in the human body, enabling it to perform various activities, such as *thymos*, *noos*, *menos* (Bremmer 2002: 1; Miller 2009: 29–50, 40–3, with further references). The main difference is that *psyche* being the identity, or the 'self', remains inactive for as long as a person lives.

Greek visions of the afterlife and their significance are discussed at length elsewhere (see, in this volume, Edmonds, Chapter 37). The descriptions of the underworld found in literature, especially in the *Odyssey*, appear to reflect widely held beliefs (on 'belief' see, in this volume, Harrison, Chapter 2). After its separation from the dead body, the *psyche* (which we shall translate as 'soul' for the sake of simplicity) of a deceased person migrates to another world, which, according to popular belief, is located below the earth, and begins an afterlife. In order to reach the realm of the dead the souls have to cross a body of water, be it a river (Acheron, into which flow Pyriphlegethon and Kokytos, which is a break-off from the water of the Styx: Hom. *Od*. 10.513–15) or a lake (Acherusian Lake). A more detailed topography of the underworld is provided by Plato (*Phd*. 111e–114c). Alternatively, one may travel to the underworld along the Okeanos, the large river that flows around the earth, as Odysseus does (Hom. *Od*. 10.509–12, 11.21–2), since it is traditionally located at the western end of the world. The Greeks believed that the dead residing in the underworld kept their identity and the distinctive features they had when they were alive. This is why the deceased person could be designated as an image (*eidolon*). In the narrative of Odysseus' journey to the realm of the dead (the *Nekyia*) the poet makes it clear that the dead retain their original appearance, for they are described once again as 'images of deceased mortals' (*nekroi . . . broton eidola kamonton*) (Hom. *Od*. 11.475–6). We are even told that the dead still have the wounds that led to their death (11.36–41). In the *Iliad* too, when the ghost of Patroklos appears to Achilles (23.65–7), it has the appearance and the clothes of the living person; even its voice is recognizable.

The idea that the souls of the dead retain the features of their former existence is also found in Aeschylus (*Eum.* 103) and in Plato (*Grg*. 524f)

(Bremer 1994: 100). Such beliefs result from the desire of the living to perpetuate the memory of the dead, which is essential for maintaining the cohesion of a family or community. Grave markers serve the function of perpetuating the memory of the deceased. The offerings found in rich graves suggest that the dead were believed to continue, in some way, their earthly existence, while the rites performed regularly at the burial site (mainly libations poured to the ground) or during commemoration ceremonies were a means of establishing communication with them (Kurtz and Boardman 1971: 200–17). Thus, the links between the living and the dead were never completely severed. The right to be buried was supported by powerful social and divine sanctions. It was also essential that the dead receive the customary rites of burial in the proper way (Kurtz and Boardman 1971: 142–9). Yet while the living have the duty of honouring the dead, they must equally avoid the pollution of death. Some of the rites performed at the burial site are clearly purificatory (Kurtz and Boardman 1971: 149–61; Parker 1983: 34–42). A consequence of the belief that it is possible to communicate with the souls of the dead is the existence of special oracles where they could be consulted (see the section 'Necromancy') and rituals for summoning them to provide advice or assistance in exceptional situations (see section 'Summoning of Souls').

The funeral is, above all, a rite of passage which is marked by rituals of separation from the world of the living and rituals of integration within the world of the dead (Felton 1999: 11, see also, in this volume, Hitch, Chapter 35). The time between death and burial is an intermediate or liminal period. The transition of the dying person between one state and another produces intense fear and anguish among the living, who perceive their contact with death as an exposure to pollution, calling for purification (Parker 1983: 34–48). As for the dead, it is important to ensure that they will be able to access 'the beyond' and begin their new existence in the underworld. For this to happen, the proper disposal of the body (burial or cremation) is considered a prerequisite (Johnston 1999b: 9–10, 83–4). This is why unburied or improperly disposed corpses are seen as a source of pollution that may cause plague and disaster (Johnston 1999b: 127–8). Another fear is that, in the case of deaths viewed as untimely or unjustified (because of the young age of the deceased or of the circumstances under which they occurred), the dead may be reluctant to accept their new status because of a desire to rejoin the world of the living

in order to obtain their due, often revenge (Johnston 1999b: 128–9). It is important to point out that violent death was commonly considered a source of pollution (Parker 1983: 104–43; Johnston 1999b: 129–33). Such dead become hostile and resentful and turn into restless souls or ghosts, spirits who interfere in the world of the living and who cannot—or do not wish to—be part of the underworld, to which they should normally belong.

To sum up, there are three categories of dead that are commonly presumed to be restless and potentially dangerous: the unburied (*ataphoi*), the prematurely dead (*aoroi*), and those who have died violently (*biaiothanatoi*) (Johnston 1999b: 127–9; Stramaglia 1999: 8–16; Alfayé 2009: 184–7). The three classes of special dead are presented in detail in Virgil's description of the visit of Aeneas to the underworld (Verg. *Aen.* 6.315–36, 426–547) (Norden 1957: 10–13; *ataphoi*: 315–36; *aoroi*: 426–9; *biaiothanatoi*: 430–547). All of these could become ghosts or *revenants* and haunt or harm men. There is not only literary, but also archaeological, evidence for the treatment of the bodies of such 'special dead' in ways that were clearly meant to restrain them and render them harmless (Alfayé 2009). The curse tablets, most of which were found in graves, occasionally attest to the involvement of the dead in the performance of magic (Eidinow 2007: 148–53; see, in this chapter, the section 'The Role of "Restless Dead" in Magic'). The magical papyri of the Roman Imperial period often contain elaborate invocations to the 'special dead' (Delgado 2001, s.v. *nekros*, *nekydaimon*, *nekys*).

THE PRIVILEGED DEAD: IDEAS ABOUT A BLISSFUL AFTERLIFE

In Homeric poetry, the realm of Hades in the underworld is generally envisaged as an unpleasant and gloomy place below earth, where even the most prominent dead lead a miserable existence. When Odysseus meets the soul of Achilles in the underworld he greets him with the flattering remark that his position is as dominant among the dead as it was among the living, to which Achilles answers sternly that he would rather be the

servant of a poor man on earth than reign among the dead (*Odyssey* 11.488–91). The only means by which men could hope to overcome the doom and gloom of death was the immortal fame (*kleos aphthiton*, *Iliad* 9.413) that might be linked to their name: the memory of the deeds of the noble chiefs and valiant warriors lived on in the songs of the singers (*aoidoi*) (Jaeger 1960: 289). In later times it was the community of the polis that kept the memory of its bravest and most prominent citizens alive. This kind of immortality is invoked by the Athenian orators of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE in the funeral speeches they delivered for the soldiers who had died fighting for their fatherland (Jaeger 1960: 289–91).

Nevertheless, some mortals could aspire to a better afterlife than the rest, provided that they were sufficiently close to the gods. This is the case of Menelaos, who learns from Proteus that he will not die, but the gods will send him instead 'to the Elysian fields at the end of the earth', the pleasant and constantly temperate realm of Rhadamanthys (who eventually became one of the judges of the dead), because he is the husband of Helen and therefore son-in-law of Zeus (Hom. *Od*. 4.563–7). According to a tradition differing from that of the *Odyssey*, Achilles too obtained the gift of a blissful afterlife. In the *Aithiopis* it was told that Thetis, after having mourned Achilles, removed him to the White Island (*Leuke Nesos*) in the Pontus Euxinus (Proclus, *Chrestomathia* 2), where a cult of Achilles is, in fact, attested since the sixth century BCE (Hooker 1988; cf. García Teijeiro and Molinos Tejada 2000: 114). Another account of the afterlife of earlier men is found in Hesiod's tale of the five human generations (*Op*. 106–201), which are linked to the origin of various types of spirits (Rosenmeyer 1957: 272–5). The most notable is the first (golden) generation, whose members died painlessly, as though they had fallen asleep, and became pure, wealth-giving spirits (*daimones hagnoi ploutodotai*) who stay on the surface of the earth as protectors of men (*h. Op*. 122–6) (Bremer 1994: 114). None of the other generations have any influence on earth after their disappearance. It is noteworthy, however, that the fourth generation, that of the heroes who fought at Thebes and at Troy, is transferred to the Isles of the Blessed (*makaron nesoi*) close to the shore of Okeanos, where earth brings forth three harvests (*Op*. 166–73), a wonderful abode strongly reminiscent of the Elysian fields described in the *Odyssey*. At the other end of the spectrum are those who are relegated to the Tartaros, the deepest place in the underworld, where they suffer

endless torture for crimes they committed against the gods. Odysseus, in his journey to the realm of the dead, met three such wrongdoers: Tityos, Tantalos, and Sisyphos (Hom. *Od*. 11.576–600).

In the course of the sixth century BCE a new conception of man's true nature and internal life emerges, mainly among the religious groups of the Orphics and the Pythagoreans. In these circles we find the belief that man is, in reality, much closer to the gods than was commonly thought before, and that a part of him, the soul, which is different and separable from the body, is of divine origin and is liberated at the moment of death. This vision of the soul is very different from the Homeric *psyche*, for it is not a mere shadow in Hades, but the real subject of man's inner life, capable of living both in this world and beyond, in a state of eternal bliss in the vicinity of the gods (Jaeger 1960: 290–3; Bremmer 2002: 11–26). Pindar, who encountered the Orphic religion in Sicily, gives us an interesting description of the nature of the soul in a fragmentarily preserved *threnos* (lament) (fr. 131b Maehler): 'The body of all men is subject to all powerful death, but there still remains alive an image of man's life, for this alone comes from the gods. It sleeps when the limbs are active, but to those that sleep, it presages in many a dream the decision of things delightful or doleful' (Jaeger 1960: 292). The idea of the divine origin of the soul is the key for understanding some well-attested beliefs. According to one such view, which is attested among other sources in funerary epigrams (Lattimore 1942: 31–43), the soul rises to heaven and turns into a star (Cumont 1949: 142–88, according to whom its origins are Indo-Iranian). A more widespread doctrine, mainly ascribed to Pythagoras, is that the soul enters into successive mortal bodies in a process of reincarnation (see, recently, Bremmer 2002: 12–15). This concept was adopted and further developed by Plato (see, recently, Bernabé 2011), who took the step of declaring the soul itself immortal (*Phd*. 69e–85b; cf. *Men*. 81b–d) (Jaeger 1960: 295–7). But such ideas remained within the religious and philosophic groups that created them and never became dominant. The initiates of the Eleusinian mysteries also believed they would be able to enjoy a blissful afterlife, probably not very different from the one described in Orphic poetry (Graf 1974: 79–150).

HEROES AND REVENANTS

Notwithstanding the widespread perception of the underworld as a gloomy place of no return, there was, as we have seen, a deeply rooted popular belief, according to which the dead could interact with the living in various ways, both beneficial and harmful. Indeed, in the perception of the ancients the most notable characteristic of the dead (and of the powers of the underworld in general) is their ambivalence (Henrichs 1991; Voutiras 1999). The most explicit formulation of this idea is found in a fragment of Aristophanes' lost comedy *Heroes* (Ar. fr. 322 K–A), where the chorus of the nameless heroes gives the following advice: 'That said, men, be on your guard and honor the heroes, for we are the guardians of good things and ill; we watch for the unjust, for robbers and footpads, and send them diseases . . .' (Parker 1983: 243–4; Henrichs 1991: 192–3; García Teijeiro and Molinos Tejada 2000: 121). These heroes are manifestly *revenants* or spirits of the dead (cf. Ath. 3.125d (Asios of Samos), 461c (Chamaeleon of Heraclea)), an aspect that has been noted and studied (Brelich 1958: 226–32; García Teijeiro and Molinos Tejada 2000). Parker remarks pertinently that this fragment 'provides welcome support for the idea that the heroes in Greece play the part assigned in other religions to the ancestors' (Parker 1983: 244). A modern parallel is reported from Singapore (Johnston 1999b: 36). Heroes as a class are mentioned in an inscription on a lead tablet of the mid-fifth century BCE from Selinous, concerning sacrifices and ritual purifications (Jameson, Jordan, and Kotansky 1993; see, recently, Robertson 2010: 15–30). It is said that one should sacrifice to spirits called the polluted (*miaroi*) Tritopatreis 'just as to the heroes, after pouring down wine through the roof' (A10), whereas to the pure (*katharoi*) Tritopatreis one should sacrifice 'just as to the gods the ancestral victims' (A17). It appears that heroes as well as the Tritopatreis are thought of here as spirits dwelling in the underworld.

Heroes were generally considered benign and helpful to mortals, but under certain circumstances they could become evil and avenging spirits, not unlike ghosts (Stramaglia 1999: 16–21). Artemidoros (*Oneirokritika* 4.78) mentions heroes who are expressly identified as restless dead (*atelestoi* and *biaiothanatoi*) (see Stramaglia 1999: 121 n. 1). The stories,

involving two famous athletes of the early fifth century BCE, are revealing in this respect. Theogenes, son of Timoxenos from Thasos, was an all-round athlete who had won countless victories mainly in boxing and the *pancration* (Fontenrose 1968: 75–6; Pouilloux 1994). Another case in point is the story of the Hero of Temesa, which Callimachus (frr. 98–9 Pf., with a full list of testimonies) judged important enough to include in his *Aitia*. The main surviving source for this story is Pausanias (6.6.7–11) (Fontenrose 1968: 79–81; Costabile 1991; Visintin 1992; Felton 1999: 26–7; Currie 2002; Redfield 2003: 245–51).

A sailor from the crew of Odysseus, who had been forced ashore by a storm at Temesa, in southern Italy, got drunk and raped a local girl. The inhabitants of Temesa stoned the sinner to death, but his ghost came back and began killing them, until they were advised by the Pythia of Delphi to propitiate the 'hero' by dedicating a sanctuary to him and giving him, once a year, the most beautiful maiden in town. It was the famous boxer Euthymos of Locri who put an end to this tribute in the first half of the fifth century BCE. He fell in love with the girl that was destined for the 'hero', fought with him and won. The ghost disappeared into the sea and Euthymos married the girl. Euthymos had won three victories at Olympia and had been honoured by two statues, one in his home town and one in Olympia, of which the base has survived (*IVO* no. 144; *LSAG* 342 no. 19; Costabile 1991: 212–13).

According to Callimachus (fr. 99 Pf.; Plin. *HN* 7.152), both statues were struck by lightning on the same day: a revenge of the 'hero' he had defeated? The question whether the fight between Euthymos and the 'hero' of Temesa was imagined as a fictional narrative or as a physical encounter has no easy answer (cf. Currie 2002: 39). It is worth recording, in any case, that Euthymos received cult as a river-god in his native Locri, which is documented by a series of clay *pinakes* found in a cave dedicated to the nymphs (Costabile 1991; for the transformation into a river-god, see Costabile 1991: 211–12, Currie 2002: 41–3). Such stories suggest that it is not always possible to distinguish clearly between hero-cult and superstitious beliefs concerning the restless dead and their interaction with humans.

JOURNEYS TO THE WORLD OF THE DEAD: *KATABASEIS* AND *ANODOI*

The descent from the world of the living to the underworld is a journey without return. There are, of course, exceptions in myth. The Greeks believed, for example, that the shrewd Sisyphus had been able to persuade Persephone to let him go back (*Thgn*. 699–718; the distinct possibility that this is a late addition to the collection of *Theognidea* does not affect the argument), but the price he eventually paid for this trick was eternal punishment. However, the fact remains that it is impossible for mortal humans to obtain direct information about the fate of the souls of the dead after their separation from the bodies to which they had belonged. This explains why beliefs about the underworld were presented as accounts of journeys by legendary persons who had been able to return to the world of the living. We know that the Greeks considered mythical heroes to be real persons who had lived in a distant past, and attributed to them feats beyond the capacity of common mortals, usually accomplished with the assistance of the gods, from whom they frequently descended.

The descriptions of what such visitors of the underworld had seen and experienced during their journey, handed down through oral tradition, were eventually fixed in writing, mainly as poetic texts, and became part of ancient literature (see Cumont 1949: 63–5, 395–6), which gave them the appearance of reliable testimonies. There were several descriptions of the underworld contained in tales about the descent (*katabasis*) of heroes to the realm of Hades and their return (*anodos*) to the world of the living (see Calvo Martínez 2000).

The oldest and most influential such tale appears to have been that of Herakles, whose most dangerous exploit was to bring up Kerberos, the hound of Hades (Hom. *Od*. 11.601–27). It has been plausibly suggested that this story had provided the subject of an independent epic poem (von der Mühll 1938: 8–9). Whether or not this is true, it is tempting to think that the tale of the descent (*katabasis*) of Herakles to the underworld was a source of inspiration for Odysseus' journey to the limits of the world in order to meet with the souls of the dead, and for other similar stories (Erbse 1972: 31–3). Poetic accounts of descents to the underworld

(*katabaseis*) appear to have been composed also within the religious context of mystery cults, especially the Eleusinian mysteries, whose initiates aspired to an undisturbed and blissful existence after death. We shall not consider these apparently influential works here since very little is known with certainty on their subject (Graf 1974: 126–50). One feature that is worth mentioning is the prominent role played by Orpheus in these texts. Directions for the journey to the underworld, probably meant for followers of mystic sects, are also found in the 'Orphic' gold leaves discovered in graves of Classical date in Greece and southern Italy, which have been extensively discussed by modern scholars (see, recently, Edmonds 2004: 1–110).

It is difficult to estimate to what extent literary accounts and works of art are accurate reflections of widespread popular beliefs, deeply rooted in mythological tradition and religious practice though they are. Yet the fact that these works were addressed to a broad public (comedies like the *Frogs* of Aristophanes were performed before a large audience that was probably a cross section of Athenian society) indicates that we can take these descriptions of the world of the dead as reflections of more or less widely accepted views. There is no doubt that the advent of philosophy and the gradual development of a scientific approach to nature presented a challenge to traditional views about life and death. Nevertheless, we have ample evidence that the old vision of the world, consisting of the sky (or Olympos) as residence of the gods, the earth populated by humans and other living beings, and the underworld as the abode of the dead, remained predominant (Bérard 1974: 21).

The main Greek gods resided on Mount Olympos and had no contact with the realm of Hades. Few of them made the journey to the underworld and back. First and foremost among these divinities is Hermes Psychopompos, whose function was to accompany the souls of the dead in their final journey to the realm of Hades. There was also Persephone, who had been seized by Hades himself and brought to the underworld in order to become his wife, but was allowed to return to earth for part of the year. Finally, we should mention Hekate, the goddess most often associated with the fearsome irregularity of the return of the dead to the world of the living, mainly in the form of ghosts (Johnston 1999b: 203–11).

CASE STUDIES

Necromancy

Necromancy, or divination with the help of the dead, is an attested practice in ancient Greece (Broadhead 1960: 302–3; Donnadieu and Villatte 1996: 81–91; Johnston 1999b: 83–5, 88; Ogden 2001; Bremmer 2002: 71–83). The most extensive treatment of the subject (Ogden 2001) covers more forms of communication with the dead than 'necromancy' in the narrow sense. There were, in fact, oracles of the dead, where the souls of the dead could be evoked and consulted (*nekyomanteia*). The best known among these were at Ephyra by the river Acheron in Epiros, at Heraclea Pontica, and at Cape Tainaron, the southernmost tip of the Peloponnese. Little is known about the consulting procedure in these oracles, but it is clear that, according to mythological tradition, their sites were entrances to the underworld. A detailed description of a necromantic ritual performed by the Thessalian witch Erichtho with the use of a corpse is described by Lucan (6.425–506; Graf 1997: 190–200).

The earliest and most detailed description of necromancy in Greek literature is the *Nekyia* (eleventh book) of the *Odyssey* (see Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989: 75–7, with a short account of the widely diverging interpretations proposed for the *Nekyia*). There has been disagreement on whether the *Nekyia* describes a descent to Hades (*katabasis*) or not (Steiner 1971: 265–6 nn. 2 and 3). In fact, Odysseus does not cross the boundary into the underworld, but reaches the limits of Ocean (*peirata Okeanoio*; we might say 'the end of the world'), where the Cimmerians live in eternal darkness; there he offers a sacrifice and the souls of the dead appear to him in order to drink the blood of the victims or he sees them from a distance (*Od*. 11.9–50):

> We then went ourselves along Ocean's stream until we came to the place which Kirke had described. There Perimedes and Eyrylochos held the sacrificial victims, and I drew my sharp sword from my thigh and dug a ditch about a cubit this way and that, and round it I poured a liquid offering to all the dead, first with a honey mixture and thereafter with sweet wine, and again the third time with water; and I sprinkled white flour on top. . . . When I had had made my prayers and entreaties to them, the races of the dead, I took the sheep and cut their throats over the ditch, and the dark cloudy blood poured in, and the ghosts of

> the departed dead assembled together from out of Erebos. . . . Then I urged and ordered my comrades to flay and burn the sheep which lay there slaughtered by the pitiless bronze, and to offer prayers to the gods, mighty Hades and fearful Persephone. As for myself, I drew my sharp sword from my thigh and sat there, not allowing the strengthless heads of the dead to come near the blood until I had enquired of Teiresias. (Dawe 1993)

Odysseus' main purpose, which he achieves, is to summon the soul of the famous seer Teiresias in order to consult him about his return to Ithaka. It has rightly been pointed out (Norden 1957: 200 n. 2) that the *Nekyia* is a consultation of an oracle of the dead (*nekyomanteia*), not a descent into Hades. According to an attractive hypothesis, the *Nekyia* of the Odyssey is an account of necromancy as practised at a sanctuary with an oracle of the dead (*nekyomanteion*) that has been transposed to a setting at the border of the realm of the dead (Steiner 1971: 269; Heubeck 1989: 75–6). This is all the more appealing in view of the fact that the *nekyomanteia* were supposed to be gates to Hades.

An account of a consultation of an oracle of the dead that was probably the best known of its kind in ancient Greece, the *nekyomanteion* of Ephyra in Epiros, by the tyrant of Corinth, Periander, who lived in the sixth century BCE, is transmitted by Herodotos (5.92.7):

> And on one day, he [Periander] had all the Corinthian women stripped of their clothing, for the sake of his own wife, Melissa. He had sent messengers to the Thesprotians on the Acheron River to consult the oracle of the dead there on a deposit of treasure belonging to a guest-friend. When Melissa appeared, she refused to tell him about it and said that she would not disclose where it was buried because she was cold and naked and she could not make use of the clothes that had been buried with her since they had not been consumed by the fire. She said that the evidence for the truth of her claim was that Periander had placed his loaves in a cold oven. When her response was reported to Periander, he found the token of its truth credible, for he had engaged in intercourse with Melissa's corpse. As soon as he heard the message, he made a proclamation announcing that all Corinthian women were to go to the sanctuary of Hera; and so they went there dressed in their finest clothes as though to attend a festival. Periander had posted his bodyguards in ambush, and now he had the women stripped, both the free women and the servants alike. Then he gathered their clothes together and, taking them to a pit in the ground, said a prayer to Melissa and burned all the clothes completely. After doing that, he sent to consult Melissa a second time, and the ghost now told him the place where his guest-friend had deposited the treasure. (Strassler 2007)

It should be pointed out that this story follows a similar pattern to that of Eukrates and Demainete told by Lucian (*Philops*. 27–8) (see Ogden 2004).

Summoning of Souls

The souls of the dead could be consulted not only in oracles; they were also believed to be able to assist the living—especially if the dead had been an important and powerful person in their lifetime. It was therefore possible to summon a soul by means of a special religious ritual. Such an evocation is found in the *Persae* of Aischylos, where Atossa, assisted by the Chorus, induces her dead husband Dareios to appear as a ghost and advise her about the future of her son Xerxes after his defeat at Salamis. The ritual consists of a hymn which is sung by the Chorus (623–80) while the queen offers libations (Broadhead 1960: 305–8; Jouan 1981). The ritual does not differ significantly from that of necromancy, except that it is not performed at an oracle of the dead, which means at an entrance to the underworld, but in front of the Persian royal palace (Aesch. *Pers*. 604–32):

> [Atossa]: I am already full of every kind of fear; hostile images from the gods appear before my eyes, and a din—no victory-song—rings in my ears. Such is the terror caused by the disaster which is driving me out of my mind. I have therefore made my way back from the palace without the chariot and finery I had before, carrying material for a libation to propitiate my son's father, of the sort that appease the dead: delicious white milk from a pure heifer, glistening honey distilled from flowers, lustral water from a virgin spring, and pure liquid taken from its wild mother, this delightful product of an ancient vine. Here also are the fragrant fruit from a pale olive-tree, which flourishes in leaf perpetually, and garlands of flowers, the children of fruitful Earth. But you, friends, sing hymns to accompany these libations to the dead, and summon up the spirit of Dareios. I will send forth to the earth to drink these gifts in honor of the gods below.
>
> [Chorus]: My lady Queen, revered by the Persians,
> You send the libations to the subterranean chambers,
> and we with hymns will ask
> the escorts of the dead
> to be benevolent beneath the earth.
> You, pure gods of the underworld,
> Earth and Hermes and king of those below,
> send up the soul from below into the light.
> For if he knows any further cure to our problems,
> he alone of men could tell how to bring it to pass. (Hall 1996)

Significantly, Dareios cannot rise from the underworld unless the gods who control it let him pass. It has been maintained that the evocation of Dareios reflects magical practice, but closer examination shows that none of the ritual acts described here goes beyond what is known of Greek religious practice and veneration of the dead (Broadhead 1960: 305–8). Nevertheless, it can be argued that rituals involving the evocation of the dead, with the terrifying apparitions of ghosts they implied, shared common elements with magical practices (Jouan 1981: 419–21).

The Role of 'Restless Dead' in Magic

Direct evidence for magic in ancient Greece has survived mainly in the form of curses or binding spells (*katadesmoi*) written on lead tablets that were deposited in graves or wells (Graf 1997: 118–51, with bibliographical references; and, in this volume, Versnel, Chapter 30). These 'curse tablets' mostly contain short formulaic texts that provide little information on the performance of the magic and the involvement of the dead in the process (Johnston 1999b: 85–6)—unlike the later magical papyri from Egypt, which contain exact directions. In a few 'curse tablets' of Classical and Hellenistic date, however, the dead persons in whose graves they were buried are invoked as witnesses or accessories to the enactment of the spell (Eidinow 2007: 148–53). There are also occasional invocations of obscure powers collectively called *daimones*. These potentially harmful dwellers of the underworld presumably include the souls of the deceased (see Voutiras 1998: 93–8, with bibliographical references; and, in this volume, Sfameni Gasparro, Chapter 28).

A very rare example of a magic spell in which the main divinities of the underworld are named is an Attic tablet beginning with the words: 'I am sending this letter to Hermes and Persephone' (see Graf 1997: 130–1 with n. 40: 'just about unique'). An unusually long binding spell from Pella, dating to the second quarter of the fourth century BCE, is particularly interesting in this respect, because it describes the situation out of which it arose, and provides information on the role of the dead man in whose grave the lead tablet had been buried and that of the *daimones* of the underworld in making the spell effective (Voutiras 1998: 15–16).

> Of Thetima and Dionysophon the ritual wedding and the marriage I bind by a written spell, as well as that of all other women, both widows and maidens, but above all of Thetima; and I entrust (this spell) to Macron and to the *daimones*. And were I ever to unfold (the tablet) and read these words again after digging it up, only then should Dionysophon marry, not before; may he indeed not take another wife than myself, but let me alone grow old by the side of Dionysophon and no one else. I implore you: have pity for [Phil]a, dear *daimones*, for I am bereft (?) of all my dear ones and abandoned. But please keep this (piece of writing) for my sake so that these events do not happen and wretched Thetima perishes miserably. [. . .] but let me become happy and blessed.

The tablet was found in the grave of an adult man—a simple pit containing no grave goods—close to the right hand of the skeleton. Makron is, therefore, almost certainly the name of the dead man, who is supposed to 'keep' the tablet with the binding spell together with the *daimones*, who are probably the souls of restless dead, *aoroi* and *biaiothanatoi* (see 'Views of the Afterlife and Communication with the Dead', above). The spell is supposed to be effective for as long as it remains buried in the grave, which places it in the underworld, the realm of the dead. The supplication of the *daimones* of the underworld by the woman making the curse indicates that she considers them instrumental in enacting the magical power of the spell. It is reasonable to assume that the woman is following the instructions of an expert magician. This, and other similar evidence, point to the conclusion that the inhabitants of the underworld were perceived, at least from the end of the Archaic period onwards, as agents enabling the enactment of curses, spells, and other magical acts (Johnston 1999a: 85–92). It was also commonly believed that the 'restless dead' (that is to say people who had died prematurely or in a violent manner), who, in other contexts, appear as ghosts, played a role, active or passive (as keepers or witnesses of a spell; Eidinow 2007: 148–50) in the performance of magic.

Ghosts and Haunted Houses

Stories about haunted houses appear to have been common in ancient Greece (Felton 1999: 38–49; Stramaglia 1999: 121–31). A good indication of how widespread the belief in ghosts infesting old houses was, is the existence of Attic comedies from the period of New Comedy (late fourth–third century BCE) based on this theme. Our knowledge of these comedies is unfortunately incomplete: Menander's *Phasma* is only partially known

and we have very little direct information about Philemon's play by the same name, although it is probable that *Mostellaria* of Plautus was an adaptation of it (Stramaglia 1999: 123 n. 8, with a list of other comedies with ghosts; Felton 1999: 50–61).

These plays may have been inspired by a collection of stories about phantoms that circulated in fourth-century Athens. According to L. Radermacher, the author of this collection could have been Heracleides Ponticus (see Stramaglia 1999: 125–6 n. 17). A story about a house haunted by the ghost of a dead man, whose body was lying under the floor —the ghost was eventually driven away by a Pythagorean philosopher—is told by Lucian (*Philops*. 30–1):

> 'Well', he (Arignotos) said, 'if you ever go to Corinth ask for the house of Eubatides, and when it is shown to you by the cherry grove, go in and tell the doorman Tibius that you'd like to see the place where Arignotos the Pythagorean dug up the spirit and drove it away, making the house habitable after that.'
>
> 'What's that all about, Arignotos?' asked Eucrates.
>
> 'It was uninhabitable for ages', he said, 'because of terrifying occurrences. If anyone went to live there he immediately fled in panic, pursued by a fearful and stupefying phantom. So the house was collapsing and the roof was falling in, and absolutely no one was brave enough to go there.'
>
> When I heard this I took my books—I have a great many Egyptian works on such topics —and went to the house around bedtime, though my host tried to stop me, almost grabbing hold of me, when he heard where I was going—into manifest disaster, as he thought. But I took a lamp and went in alone. I put the light down in the biggest room and began to read, sitting quietly on the floor, when the spirit appeared, thinking that he was approaching an ordinary sort of man and expecting to scare me like the others. He was squalid-looking, with long hair, and blacker than the darkness, and he stood over me and had a go at me, assailing me from all sides to see if he could get the better of me, now in the form of a dog, now of a bull or a lion. But I produced my most horrific spell, speaking it in Egyptian, forced him into a corner of a dark room and charmed him away. Then I noted the spot where he went down and then I went to sleep.
>
> At dawn, when everyone had given up hope and was expecting to find me dead like the others, I emerged to everyone's surprise, and went to Eubatides to tell him the good news that he could now live in his house, which was free from pollution and horrors. So, taking him with me, and a lot of others who came along attracted by the extraordinary event, I led him to the spot where I had seen the spirit go down, and told them to get forks and spades and dig. When they had done so a body was found buried about six feet deep: it had decomposed and only the bones were lying in order. We dug it up and buried it, and from then on the house was no longer troubled with phantoms. (Costa 2005)

A very similar story about a haunted house in Athens is transmitted by Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 7.27.5–11. Pliny and Lucian could conceivably have adapted their stories from a common source, all the more so as, in both cases, the person who intervenes in order to free the

house from the ghost haunting it is a philosopher (Stramaglia 1999: 125–7).

CONCLUSION

The initial Greek perception of the soul as the spirit of life leaving the body at the moment of death allowed for little communication between the dead and the living apart from commemoration. From the late Archaic period onwards there is a shift in the concept of the soul, which becomes more versatile. Consequently, the boundary separating the living from the dead becomes less clear, for at least certain dead appear to be able to transgress it and interact with mortals. But the overall picture is blurred by the fact that seemingly contradictory eschatological beliefs can coexist.

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For ancient Greek conceptions of immortality, death, and the afterlife, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1995; Johnston 1999a; Jaeger 2001; Bremmer 2002; as well as, this volume, Radcliffe Edmonds, chapter 37. On the topic of heroes and heroization, see García Teijeiro and Molinos Tejada 2000; Currie 2002. The Greek concept of the soul is discussed in Bremmer 1983. For divinatory practices relating to the dead, see in particular Ogden 2001. On Orphism, see Turcan 1959; and, more recently, Edmonds 2004, which also discusses ancient Greek myths pertaining to Hades and the underworld. On ancient magic more generally, see Graf 1997; Voutiras 1998; Delgado 2001.

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CHAPTER 28

DAIMONIC POWER

GIULIA SFAMENI GASPARRO

THE PROBLEM

A Long-Lasting System

In dealing with ‘daimonic power’ in the Greek religious tradition, we need to make a premise: we cannot, in fact, presume that we can reconstruct a ‘daimonology’, in the sense of a clearly defined doctrine or a coherent and final system of ideas. Rather, ‘daimonology’ is a more or less homogeneous and articulated set of ideas and beliefs, sometimes associated with ritual practice, relating to the category of the divine which the Greeks, from the time of Homer, denoted by the term *daimon/daimones*. This set of ideas is to be assessed in the context of the Greek religious tradition as it originated and developed over time, without dogmas and institutions or official religious authorities with the power to impose rigid regulatory uniformity on beliefs and ritual practices. There is, also, the difficulty of applying clear steps within this long historical process, establishing, as it were, the precise ‘phases’ and isolating

compact, autonomous blocks within the mobile flow of ethnic–national religious beliefs. Avoiding anachronisms by interpreting the sources of the Archaic and Classical age in the light of subsequent developments, according to ideological schemes of a different historical–cultural situation, seems to be key. The more or less complex formulations of the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods must, therefore, be placed in relation to earlier traditions, to measure any continuity, mutations, or innovations.

The Sources

There are numerous problems stemming from the nature of the source material available for the study of daimonic power. Literary texts outnumber 'direct' documents, such as inscriptions. It is difficult, indeed sometimes impossible, to differentiate, within the literary tradition, between material derived from a writer's own interpretations and ideological views, and that which might reflect the more widespread beliefs and practices of the common people. However, the gap between learned speculations of individuals and the broader mentalities and religious experiences of Greek communities and numerous Hellenized peoples within the Mediterranean world is not unbridgeable if we consider the stability of religious traditions in ancient cultures, and of Greek religion in particular. In the absence of an official normative authority, there was a deeply conservative attitude with regard to the beliefs and cult practices of the civic communities. None of those who deal with religious themes, be they poets, historians, philosophers, or writers, innovates in a radical fashion, even when adopting a critical position. Rather, to a greater or lesser degree, they draw on the common tradition, which also nourished their own ideological and cultural roots.

Different Notions of *Daimon*

There are three basic meanings that make up the flexible and varied content of Greek 'daimonology' in the long course of its historical development. One meaning, which we may term theological, uses

daimones to refer to a category of superhuman beings within a graduated hierarchy, often including heroes, whose extremes are occupied by gods and men. Within this continuum, the *daimones* constitute a group wielding specific powers and tasks, as intermediaries between gods and men. According to a second, anthropological meaning, the *daimon* is conceived of as equivalent to the soul of a person, living or dead. This view correlates with the protective function often ascribed to the *daimon*, which is probably the oldest conception, the one most deeply rooted in the Greek ethical and religious tradition, and is linked to that of the individual's destiny (*moira*) and his lot or fortune (*tyche*). In its third meaning, 'daimonology' also assumes a cosmological function, since the *daimones* are located in either of the cosmic levels that form the graduated structure of 'the All'.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Although the scholarly debate on the subject has generated numerous, authoritative works, recent studies taking a broad documentary and methodological look at the whole chronological span of Greek daimonology are still extant. Useful and praiseworthy early studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Hild 1892; Andres 1918; Heinze 1965 [1892]) aimed at providing a broad overview of the theme for the Archaic and Classical ages, and, in part, for the early Hellenistic period. Later research, however, focused merely on specific contexts. This research often provided a philosophical reflection aimed at 'systematizing' the complex, shifting horizon of Greek religious traditions rather than looking at the specifically religious aspects of the topic. In this field we should mention the many, varied studies on the Pythagorean environment, including, of particular interest, that by Detienne (1963), which also reflects on the Platonic context. The latter, in fact, throughout its long history, is deeply interested in the daimonological theme, often adopted as an interpretative key to bridge the gap between popular belief and worship on the one hand, and rational speculation of philosophers on the other. After Jensen (1966) and the contribution of Marx-Wolf (2009),

the documented essay by Timotin (2012) is of interest. From an eminently philosophical perspective, this work examines the 'history of the notion of *daimon* from Plato to the last Platonists'. From Porphyry to Iamblichos, up to Proklos and Damaskios, these 'last Hellenes' opposed the increasingly pervasive and ultimately victorious affirmation of Christianity. They tried, with all the tools of philosophical reflection, to propose a new interpretation of the traditional Greek religious heritage. Daimonological exegesis, variously articulated according to context, often offered them an interpretative key to include aspects of this heritage deemed incompatible with the canons of the 'philosophical religion' they desired.

THE VARIOUS FACES OF THE PRISM: THE *DAIMON* BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Daimones as a Category of Superhuman Beings in the 'Theology' of the Greeks

In Plutarch's (*c*.47–127 CE) dialogue *On the Disappearance of Oracles*, Kleombrotos focuses on the somewhat thorny issue of Providence. In his view: 'those persons have resolved more and greater perplexities who have set the race of demigods (*ton daimonon genos*) midway between gods and men, and have discovered a force to draw together, in a way, and to unite our common fellowship' (*De def. or*. 10 414e–415a; trans. Babbitt 1962 [1936], with changes).

A history of the problem is proposed:

> Among the Greeks, Homer, moreover, appears to use both names in common and sometimes to speak of the gods (*theoi)* as *daimones*; but Hesiod was the first to set forth clearly and distinctly four classes of rational beings: gods, *daimones*, heroes, in this order, and, last of all, men; and as a sequence to this, apparently, he postulates his transmutation, the golden race into *daimones*. (415a–b)

In *On Isis and Osiris* Plutarch also appeals to the authority of Plato, Pythagoras, Xenokrates, and Krysippos, who,

> following the lead of early writers on sacred subjects (*theologoi*), allege (the *daimones*) to have been stronger than men, yet not possessing the divine quality unmixed and uncontaminated, but with a share also in the nature of the soul and in the perceptive faculties of the body, and with susceptibility to pleasure and pain and to whatsoever other experience is incident to these mutations, and is the source of much disquiet in some and of less in others. For in *daimones*, as in men, there are diverse degrees of virtue and of vice. (*De Is. et Os*. 25.360d–e)

Some modern scholars have questioned whether the men of the golden race (Hes. *Op*. 121–6), who became *daimones* after death, could have been a distinct category for Hesiod. Instead, it has been argued that he understands *daimones* in the Homeric sense of ‘gods’, beings of divine status without special connotations. Such a view contradicts the entire ancient tradition, which always understood Hesiod’s *daimones* as beings of special status within the general theological scheme, different from the great gods.

Plato provides the earliest attestation of this interpretation. In the *Kratylos* (397e–398a) and *Leg*. (713c–d) there is talk of a ‘race of daimons’, defined as ‘superior’, a particular category of superhuman beings that acts as ‘guardians’ of men at the time of Kronos. This notion can also be found in the Pythagoreans, whose interest in Hesiod, whom they considered almost a ‘sacred’ writer, is well known. At the same time, this interpretation makes nonsense of the deeper import of the myth of the four races and certainly reflects its author’s attempt to construct a coherent framework for the disorderly religious inheritance that he was trying to rethink in terms of his own ethical view.

Among the various meanings of the myth, we may insist here upon its vocation, in terms of nature and functions, as a classification of beings which operates on different levels of reality that are notionally distinct, but does not imply any break within a homogeneous, continuous chain of being. The history of man is linked to that of the gods by virtue of the metamorphosis into *daimones* of ‘the golden race of mortal men’ (Hes. *Op*. 109).

The word *daimon* retains, throughout Greek tradition from the Homeric poems to the very end, its meaning as a synonym of *theos*. It has its own specific nuances—already evident in Homer—which embody a supernatural presence and power, difficult for humans to identify, and that

often intervenes unexpectedly, bringing with it risks for people. Among the many examples analysed by François (1957), we need merely to recall Menelaus' reflection on the outcome of his fight with Hector (Hom. *Il*. 17.89–104). Within the terms used to define the divine power that protects the Trojan hero, *daimon* alternates with *theos*, but takes on the meaning of an indefinite supernatural force that directs the course of events according to its own design, which humans cannot oppose.

In Hesiod's text, the variables of meaning of the words used to identify superhuman powers, such as *theos* and *daimon*, are emphasized to indicate a particular status. The poet's moralizing perspective represents the *daimones* as guardians 'of mortal men', acting justly, but also as *plutodotoi*, 'bestowers of wealth'. This is their *geras basileion* or 'royal privilege', which characterizes their position as divine beings (Hes. *Th*. 122–6).

In Hesiod's scheme we can see a whole series of ideas, familiar from different levels of Greek religious tradition, neatly imbricated into a consistent framework. The *daimones*, as an ancient race of men 'hidden beneath the earth', are related to the souls of the dead. The role of watchers (*phylakes*) suggests a notion familiar from Homeric poems, and recurrent in later Greek tradition. In lyric (Pind. *Ol*. 13.105; Pind. *Pyth*. 5.122–3) and gnomic (Thgn. 149–50, 161–6, 402–6, 637–8) poetry, tragedy (Aesch. *Pers*. 158, 825 and *passim*; Soph. *OC* 76; Eur. *Med*. 1347; Eur. *Alc*. 499, 561; Eur. *Andr*. 98, 974; Eur. *Phoen*. 1653), history (Xen. *An*. 5.2.25.), and oratory (Lys. 2. 78f), the *daimon* appears as a divine agent intervening at will in human affairs, positively or negatively, for good or ill, often to revenge crimes, as the *Daimon Alastor* in works of tragedy (Aesch. *Per*. 355–554), and invariably exercising a decisive influence upon human fate.

From Euripides (*Bacch*. 894)—who provides the first testimony—onwards, in the semantic sphere of *theos/oi* and *daimon/es*, along with the neuter *to theion* attested for the first time in Aesch. *Cho*. 957, we see the neuter *to daimonion*. Both forms of neuter substantivized adjective, according to the contexts, have an abstract ('the divine', 'the daimonic') or collective sense, that is, corresponding to *theoi* and *daimones*. These two new semantic formations were to have an important role in influencing the evolution of the meaning of Greek 'theology' and 'daimonology'. These terms are often used as alternative and converging designations of the power that stands over and directs cosmic and human

life. In the many peculiar articulations of a polytheistic scenario (on which see, in this volume, Pirenne-Delforge and Pironti, Chapter 4), they also assume a differentiated significance and make it possible to circumscribe, in the various historical contexts, the two distinct spheres of the 'divine' and the 'daimonic'.

Daimones between Folklore and Learned Speculations: Presocratics and Pythagoreans

In Hesiod's scheme the '*daimones*-guardians' appear as a well-defined category of beings, midway between gods and men, and acting as intermediaries between them. There are many elements that lead us to conclude that this notion is not the poet's invention, but reflects popular belief that the *daimones* were superhuman beings related to, but distinct from, the gods, who acted as intermediaries between gods and men.

According to a doxographic tradition, Thales of Miletos (*c*.624–546 BCE) was the first to establish a systematic classification of *theo*s, *daimones*, and *heroes*: God was the intelligence (*nous*) of the world, *daimones* were psychic essences, and *heroes* were human souls separated from the body, good or bad, according to the moral quality of the relevant soul (Athenagoras *Leg. pro Christ*. 23).

According to Thales, souls are intermingled in the universe, in such a way that 'all things are full of gods' (*De anima* 411a7, DK 11A22. Cf. Plato, *Leg*. 899b). Plato's scholiast affirms that, according to Thales, 'the world is besouled and full of *daimones*' (*Schol. In Remp*. 600 A: *apud* Hesychios DK 11[1]A3. Cf. Aët., *Plac*. 1.7.11, *Dox*. 301, 20–2 = DK 11A23). *Daimones* correspond to Aristotle's *theoi*. This represents an attempt to express in philosophical terms the conceptual categories of religious tradition. It is uncertain whether the two terms carried different connotations in Thales' cultural and religious contexts.

As Detienne (1963) shows, such a distinction between *theoi* and *daimones* seems to be relatively clear within the Pythagorean tradition. It is significant that, among the numerous senses of *daimon* in Pythagorean sources, there is a category of beings with a particular function in the life of men, to whom they are linked, inasmuch as they are souls detached

from their bodies. The *Pythagorean Commentaries* cited by Alexander Polyhistor (first century BCE: Diog. Laert. 8.24–33) reveal that

> The whole air is full of souls. We call them *daimones* and *heroes*, and it is they who send dreams, signs and illnesses to men—and not only to men, but also to sheep and other domestic animals. It is toward these *daimones* that we direct purifications and apotropaic rituals, all kinds of scryings, kledonomancy and other things of a similar kind.

The date of the *Pythagorean Commentaries* is uncertain (an early Pythagorean work or an expression of second or first century BCE Neopythagorism). The text contains different senses of *daimon* because it draws upon sources of diverse age and origins: the idea that the *daimones* and heroes are equivalent to the souls that swarm in the air, analogous to the doctrine of Thales, may hark back to an Archaic idea, such as daimonic influence upon animals. The oracular function of these daimonic beings, and, in particular, the ascription of purifying and apotropaic rituals, as well as scrying and kledonomancy, to the daimonic world, probably derives from intellectual speculations in a Pythagorean milieu, similar to that represented by commentary on the Derveni Papyrus, in Plato's *Symposium*, and continued in the Platonic tradition from Xenokrates to Plutarch and Porphyry.

Before examining these authors, the position of Empedokles (*c*.490–430 BCE) should be mentioned. He was a complex, original figure of great philosophical and religious interest. In his poems (*On Nature* and *Purifications*), which have reached us through an indirect fragmentary tradition, we see the notion of the *daimon* as a psychic entity involved in the cosmic drama of the struggle between Neikos (Strike) and Philia (Love), and caught in a cycle of painful transmigrations into different bodies (humans, animals, plants). Empedokles' *daimones* are entities closely linked to the anthropological sphere. In fact, the poet-philosopher, having evoked the cycle of *metensomatosis* (reincarnation) to which the murderer and perjurer must be subjected, 'far from the blessed, who like long-lived daimons have attained life', can claim to be one of them, 'exiled by divine decree and wandering' (fr. 115; cf. Plut. *De def. or*. 418e, 420d).

Plato

The intermediate and ‘intermediary’ nature of *daimones* reformulates the polyvalent meaning represented by the popular notion of *daimon*, and appears formalized for the first time in the well-known Platonic myth of Eros.

In the myth, Diotima of Mantinea tells Sokrates (Pl. *Symp*. 203a–204c), in support of the revelation that Eros is a *daimon*: ‘he is a big *daimon*, and the entire *daimonion* is half-way (*metaxu*) between god and mortal’. The power (*dynamis*) of the *daimones* is ‘to play between heaven and earth, flying upwards with our worship and our prayers, and descending with the heavenly answer and commandments . . . They form the medium of the prophetic arts, of the priestly rites of sacrifice, initiation, and incantation, of divination and sorcery’ (202d–203a). The theological aim of the discourse is clear in the conclusion, ‘The god will not mingle with the human, and it is only through this (*to daimonion*) that the gods have intercourse and conversation with men, whether waking or sleeping.’ The wise woman concludes, ‘The *daimones* are many and of many kinds’ (203a).

This is probably a collective representation shared both by ordinary people and by the learned, as the same idea is found in an increasing number of texts from the fourth century BCE onwards. In several dialogues, Plato develops the notion of a personal *daimon* who protects the individual during this life and guides him in the life to come (*Phd*. 107d–108b, 113d; *Resp*. 620d–e), and maybe is actually the superior, divine part of the soul (*Ti*. 90a–c). Plato also makes use of the traditional tripartite scheme of gods/*daimones*/heroes to define the categories of superhuman beings.

The Platonic Tradition—*Epinomis*

The author of *Epinomis*, probably Philippus of Opus (*c*.350 BCE), set out a cosmological scheme with a hierarchy of beings closely linked with the five physical elements. First comes ‘the divine host of the stars’ (981e), visible, immortal, and composed of fire. Last is the creature ‘made of earth, entirely mortal’ (984b). The author distinguishes two kinds of *daimones*: ethereal and of the air. Without specifying the precise relationship between the Olympian gods and the three elements, ether, air, and water, which fall between the poles (984d), the author puts the

daimones in second and third place after the stars (984d–e). Both are invisible and

> of a kind that is quick to learn and of a retentive memory: they read all our thoughts and regard the good and noble with signal favour, but the very evil man with deep aversion. For they are not exempt from feeling pain whereas a god who enjoys the fullness of deity is clear above both pain and pleasure, though possessed of all-embracing knowledge and wisdom. (984e–985a)

The intermediate beings, who are subject to pain, form the link between the poles of the universe, acting ‘as interpreters, and interpreters of all things, to one another and to the highest gods’. Their agency is at work in dreams and oracles, and forms the basis of various city cults (984e–985a).

The *Epinomis* bears witness to the process of systematization of the Pythagorean and Platonic doctrine, with regard to the intermediate and intermediary status of the *daimones*. It also foreshadows a theme developed later by Xenokrates and Plutarch by expressing the notion of *daimon* as a tool for reinterpreting Greek myths and cults. Whereas the god is perfect and impassible, the *daimones* are capable of experiencing suffering. In this intellectual context, it follows that mutability and vicissitude must also be characteristic of the lower orders of divine being. This notion allows writers such as Xenokrates and Plutarch to reinterpret the adventures of the gods of traditional mythology, as well as the ecstatic and orgiastic cults, with reference not to the higher gods but to *daimones*, who belong to a level close to human beings, and who are susceptible to suffering and, on occasion, ambiguous or downright wicked.

The Platonic Tradition—Xenokrates

According to Plutarch, Xenokrates (396/5–314/3 BCE) accepted the compound nature of *daimones* and distinguished between *daimones* that were good and those that were evil, those who were beneficent and those harmful to mankind (*De Is. et Os*. 26, 361b = fr. 25 Heinze 1965 [1892]: 168; cf. *De def. or*. 17, 419a = fr. 24 Heinze 1965 [1892]: 167). Plutarch accepts this distinction, and sometimes also attributes it to the Stoic Krysippos (*De Is. et Os*. 25, 360e; *De def. or*. 17, 419a). The role of Xenokrates in the history of Greek daimonology must be reconsidered in the light of Pythagoras, who should be attributed both with identifying

daimon-tyche and with the distinction between good and bad *daimones*, which, in turn, is rooted in ancient folk beliefs. It is important to note that, in the age of Xenokrates, on the basis of popular notions probably filtered down from and elaborated by the Pythagoreans, there was already a clear distinction between two aspects in the intermediate level of the *daimones*, one positive and beneficial, the other negative and malevolent in its intervention in human life.

Peculiar to Xenokrates' daimonology, as expounded in the *De defectu oraculorum* (13, 416c–d), is the Platonic notion of the characteristically intermediate nature of daimons, which is defined according to the contemporaneous presence of the 'power of the god' (*theou dynamis*), and of 'human emotions' (*pathos thnetou*). The notion of *daimon* has already been seen in the sense of a mutability typical of everything that pertains to the pathetic, passionate, and compatible element, peculiar to the mortal world, and therefore capable of turning to good or bad (*De Is. et Os*. 25, 360e).

Although Xenokrates did not identify *daimones* with the gods of traditional polytheism as Heinze would have him do, he did take a decisive step in this direction. According to Plutarch, this occurred once he related important Greek mythical–ritual religious systems associated with figures such as Demeter and Dionysos, to those pathetic, mutable entities that are daimons. The result is a clear daimonization of the ritual sphere, highly typical of ancient Greek religion, in which are involved pathetic gods, subject to a 'vicissitude' far from the detached and unchangeable stability of the Olympian gods. Under the gaze of the philosopher, the pathetic gods reveal themselves to be incompatible with the impassable image of the divine, being better suited to exemplifying an intermediate category such as the daimonic and, indeed, the most disturbing and dangerous side of it.

In conclusion, Plato's second successor expounds a keen interest in ancestral religious traditions, reinterpreted in the light of his own philosophical postulates, together with an organically structured and functioning daimonology in which several contributions converge, not only Platonic, naturally, but also Pythagorean.

Many voices contributed to the formulation of the daimonological theories that were particularly in favour in Platonic environments and were more or less influenced by Pythagorism. The major exponents of this tradition included Antiochus of Ascalon (late second, early first century

BCE) and Maximus of Tyre (second century CE), who affected other philosophical traditions in various ways, from Aristotelianism to Stoicism.

The Platonic Tradition and the Stoics

It is worth noting the views of certain Stoics, to whom Diogenes Laertios (7.151) attributes a doctrine of guardian *daimones*. Aëtius (first or second century CE) records that *daimones* are equated with the *ousiai psychikai* (*Plac*. 1.8.2; *Dox*. 307a 9–14 = SVF 2, 1101). The Stoics, like the Pythagoreans and the Platonists, attributed the working of oracles to *daimones* (Stob. *Ecl*. 2.6.5b.12). Later, Poseidonios (*c*.136–51 BCE) accepted the idea that the spirits of the dead became *daimones* (Sext. Emp. *Math*. 9, 71–4 Mutschmann 231 = fr. 400b, Theiler 317). This view comes nearest to the Greek popular belief that persisted from the Hesiodic myth of the races through the centuries to the Mediterranean world of the Hellenistic period, and beyond, throughout the Roman imperial period. Since various traditions shared the assumption that the dead profoundly interfered in the existence of the living, it was one of the many themes on which the complex cultural amalgam of late antique civilization could converge.

The Platonic Tradition—Plutarch

The positions of Plutarch and Celsus are of particular importance in the Greek Platonic tradition while, in the field of Latin culture strongly influenced by Greek philosophical traditions, we should mention Apuleius. In Plutarch’s elaborate, complex daimonology (Soury 1942), the two most significant aspects are those indicated by Plutarch himself as peculiar to Xenokrates; these assume a fundamental role and a precise theoretical systematization in Plutarch's religious vision. This vision makes the distinction between good daimons and bad daimons—and the systematic formulation of the ‘intermediate nature’ of the daimon category between the divine and human levels, in both its components (positive and negative)—by virtue of the typical instability and pathetic nature that intrinsically defines the daimon category.

The two crucial aspects of Plutarch's daimonology, proposed with reasoned arguments in *De defectu oraculorum* (10–22, 414e–422c), act, in *De Iside et Osiride*, as an interpretive module for the mythical–ritual cycle associated with the Egyptian couple Isis–Osiris and similar Greek religious systems, such as those related to Demeter and Dionysos. As it is understood, these religious systems do not represent the whole daimonological framework of Plutarch, who contemplates a dynamic communication between different levels: the notion of *daimones*-souls, sometimes capable of purification that enables their transfer to the divine rank, or degradation with subsequent imprisonment in human bodies (*De def. or*. 10, 415b–c).

Plutarch was also familiar with the idea, developed in numerous forms in the *Moralia* and the *Vitae*, of a personal *daimon*—the individual's guardian (cf. *De genio Socratis*), and/or the superior, divine element of the soul—a notion of clear Platonic origin (*Tim.* 90a–c). The personal *daimon* survives the death of the body and undergoes an often dramatic eschatological experience, as seen in the three great myths, respectively of Sylla (*De fac*. 940f–945d), of Timarchus (*De gen*. 589f– 592e), and of Tespesios (*De sera* 563b–568f).

The Platonic Tradition—Celsus

A substantially similar vision characterizes the author of the 'True Doctrine'; Origen passed on long excerpts of this work in his detailed confutation. Celsus repeatedly rebukes Christians for refusing to pay the necessary homage to the *daimones*, to whom the custody of the world is entrusted (Origen, *C. Cels*. 8.55). The *daimones* must be worshipped in accordance with the traditional laws of each city (8.57). Christians are thus in a contradictory position because, while enjoying all the sustenance offered by the world, they do not worship its guardians and guarantors (8.33). Celsus mentions that these beings, if deprived of their rightful honours, may cause serious harm to humanity (8.35), but will bring numerous benefits through oracles and apparitions when they are properly venerated (8.45).

Origen states that 'Celsus had said nothing about daimons being evil' (8.39). Unlike Xenokrates and Plutarch, and like Apuleius, he outlines a

unitary framework where ‘the true recipients of worship were the *daimones*, intermediate and “pathetic” ’. This worship was commonly addressed to the gods of the various traditional polytheistic religions, but here is attributed to both *daimones* and gods without distinction, given their power over cosmic events and human life. There is, therefore, no inherent negativity of *daimones* but rather a common passionate nature, since they are the source of benefits and of harm to humans, as a result of the respectively benevolent or disapproving attitude of these ‘guardians’ of worldly existence.

The observance of traditional cults is thus seen as an essential tool for the maintenance of cosmic equilibria and the correct relationship between men and *daimones*. The foundation for harmonious functioning of cosmic and human life is perceived as being based on the religious vision of a polytheistic structure characterized by the functional breakdown of tasks and attributes among the various divine figures, and the celebration of ancestral rites by the city community. Celsus’ restraint regarding man’s relationship with the lords of cosmic life, leads him to firmly distance himself from blood sacrifice. This reveals the changed spiritual climate as well as Celsus’ attitude; the latter seems similar to the positions of contemporary Platonism. He warns readers not to be absorbed by the worship rendered to the *daimones*, which leads away from the higher god. He evokes the opinion of the ‘wise men’, according to whom

> most of the earthly *daimones* are absorbed with created things, and are riveted to blood and burnt offerings and magical enchantments, and are bound to other things of this sort, and can do nothing better than healing the body and predicting the coming fortune of men and cities, and that all their knowledge and power concerns merely mortal activities. (8.60; trans. Chadwick 1965)

The two key themes of Porphyry’s discourse are evoked: first, there is the close connection between daimonic power and the practice of blood sacrifice. These terrestrial beings nourish themselves with the vapours emanating from the victim, and, in particular, with its blood, causing that thickening of the pneumatic vehicle that binds them firmly to the corruptible and passionate world. The second key notion is that the power of daimons is concerned solely with bodily and worldly goods, whose possession nevertheless risks, as Celsus stresses, distancing man from those ‘higher goods’ in which can be found his true spiritual and religious dimension. A daimonic presence was considered necessary for the

maintenance of cosmic order, although such a presence possessed disturbing and even dangerous aspects due to its ability to distract man from the real spiritual good. The uninterrupted tension of the soul must be directed towards the supreme, transcendent deity.

The Platonic Tradition—*Daimones* and Blood Sacrifice in Porphyry

Porphyry's extensive and complex argument is aimed at demonstrating the obsolete and improper nature of blood sacrifice, with the consequent consumption of meat, the central act of worship in the polis. In it, he states that he 'shall not attempt to dissolve the legal institutes which the several nations have established . . . But as the laws . . . permit us to venerate divinity by things of the most simple, and of an inanimate nature, hence . . . let us sacrifice according to the law of the city' (*Abst*. 2.33; trans. Taylor 1965). Porphyry continues: 'Let us therefore also sacrifice, but let us sacrifice in such a manner as is fit, offering different sacrifices to different powers' (2.34).

Having proposed the notion of diverse *dynameis* (powers) to which the *thysia* (sacrifice) of man is addressed, he outlines an initial theological framework that seems to have been borrowed partially from the treatise *On Sacrifices* by Apollonios of Tyana (see quotation in Euseb. *Praep. evang*. 4.12, 1, 142).

After the highest god there is a second level of 'the intelligible Gods' who are derived from him. Addressed to these gods are 'hymns orally enunciated' (2.34.4). The third divine level is that of the stars, in whose honour, according to Pythagorean teaching, there must be lit a fire of a similar nature to them. This means that no animate being must be sacrificed, but only vegetable elements (2.36.3–4): 'For he who is studious of piety knows, indeed, that to the Gods no animal is to be sacrificed, but that a sacrifice of this kind pertains to daimons, and other powers, whether they are beneficent, or depraved' (2.36.5).

To illustrate the practice of animal sacrifice, with all the related *miasma* ('contamination') that springs from it and from relative dietary practices, Porphyry appeals to a second theological scheme, attributed to the

‘Platonists’, which partly coincides with that of Apollonios of Tyana already mentioned, to offer the basis for an articulated and solidly constructed daimonological doctrine.

At the top of a ladder of divine beings is the *protos theos* (‘First God’), ‘incorporeal, immoveable, and impartible’, completely self-sustaining. This First God is followed by the Soul of the world, ‘incorporeal, and liberated from the participation of any passion’. The other gods are the heavens (*kosmos*) ‘and the fixed and wandering stars who are visible Gods’. While the First God and the Soul of the world do not require anything outside themselves, meaning that no material homage need be made to them, thanks are given to the visible gods for the benefits received through offerings of inanimate objects (2.37.1). Porphyry speaks of ‘the multitude . . . of those invisible beings . . . who Plato indiscriminately calls *daimones*’ (2.37.4). Using this wide and varied categorization Porphyry situates traditional polytheistic structures within the theological vision of contemporary Platonism. The result is the establishment of a clear dichotomy between the planes of belief and worship, at least in relation to the central act of the latter, consisting in offering the gods an animal victim.

Porphyry, in fact, distinguishes between two classes of *daimones*, good and bad respectively, and identifies the first with the gods of polytheism:

> The remaining multitude is called in common by the name of *daimones*. The general persuasion, however, respecting all these invisible beings, is this, that if they become angry through being neglected, and deprived of the religious reverence which is due to them, they are noxious to those by whom they are thus neglected, and that they again become beneficent, if they are appeased by prayers, supplications, and sacrifices, and other similarities. (2.37.5)

In the opinion of Porphyry, the information related to *daimones* is confusing, and leads to incorrect judgements about them.

Porphyry illustrates a doctrine that, by being linked to the theological schema set forth earlier in this section, places the *daimones* in direct relation to the Universal Soul (*Psyche*). They are, in fact, none other than *psychai* (souls) derived from the Universal Soul and destined to govern the sublunary regions. The souls, with pneumatic support, that is, a sort of material garment, are distinguished from each other with regard to the relationship established with this inferior component, later defined as ‘corporeal, passive and corruptible’ (2.39.2). Those souls that manage to

dominate the *pneuma* by directing it ‘in agreement with reason’ become good *daimones* and exert a beneficial power on the various cosmic regions and on human activity (2.38.2). They are thus identified with the gods, as functioning typically in the polytheistic tradition. Porphyry adds a category of ‘intermediary’ daimons. He explicitly appeals to the Platonic doctrine of the *Symposium* (202e) to define these beings as those ‘who announce the affairs of men to the gods, and the will of the gods to men; carrying our prayers, indeed, to the gods as judges, but oracularly unfolding to us the exhortations and admonitions of the gods’ (2.38.3).

To these beings, man mistakenly attributes feelings of revenge and the ability to cause injury if they are not worshipped. This malevolent capacity is instead characteristic of those souls who, overwhelmed by the passionate support of the *pneuma*, are themselves prey to sensitive appetites. Although belonging to the common category of *daimones*, these souls can rightly be termed malevolent (2.38.4). Porphyry then expounds a complex daimonology that uses various elements already present in an extensive and well-established tradition that, in Greece, flowing from a diverse and mobile substrate of Archaic folk beliefs, seems to have found, in ancient Pythagorism, a fruitful soil where it could take root to assume more or less elaborate shapes and move towards new solutions.

Having defined the unique character of the daimons as being invisible and imperceptible to the senses, Porphyry affirms their ability to assume various guises so that they can manifest themselves visibly. The evil daimons occupy the regions near to the earth and attempt to commit all sorts of evil and violent acts against men. Instead, the intervention of the good daimons, even when aimed at correcting human behaviour, is distinguished by its regularity and moderation (2.39.1–4).

Porphyry concludes that: ‘On this account a wise and temperate man will be afraid, in a religious sense, to use sacrifices of this kind, through which he will attract to himself such-like *daimones*; but he will endeavor in all possible ways to purify his soul’ (2.43.1). Porphyry’s perspective, with its firm condemnation of blood sacrifice, reveals the specific originality of some of its aspects, primarily the fundamental anthropological motivation of the entire context, oriented to the salvation of the soul. This perspective nevertheless presents itself as a last, radical result of attitudes and trends variously present in the Greek tradition, where sometimes the criticism of sacrifice is found within a theological

framework with a structure that, by degrees, links ritual practice, or other aspects of worship considered somewhat at odds with divine dignity, with the daimonic rank, seen as intermediate between gods and men.

DAIMONES AND CULT

Some documents, particularly epigraphic, reveal more clearly traditional popular beliefs and rituals and show the process by which Greek religious thinking came to distinguish between the words *theoi* and *daimones* so as to define two categories of divine beings. In the inscriptions from the oracular sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, a couple 'ask Zeus Naios and Dione by praying to which of the gods or heroes or *daimones* and sacrificing will they and their household do better both now and for all time' (*SGDI* 1582A: fourth century BCE; cf. 1585B, 1566A). *Daimones* are often evoked in the curses and *defixiones*, or curse formulae, usually placed in tombs against adversaries by whom one feels threatened or for purposes of love magic (Sfameni Gasparro 2001).

A text of one of the gold tablets from two tomb mounds at Thurii in Magna Graecia, also from the fourth century BCE, relates to the Orphic tradition that extensively permeates the whole of Greek religious history, from the Archaic Age to its last expressions in late antiquity. The dead person declares: 'I come from among the pure, pure, Queen of the subterranean beings, Eukles, Eubouleus, and the other gods and daimons' (Thurioi 5 Graf and Johnston 2013). An Orphic ritual environment, which involves the *daimones*, is referred to in the Papyrus recovered from a funeral pyre at Derveni (Macedonia), dated to the fourth century BCE (see, in this volume, Edmonds, Chapter 37). The text is the oldest by nearly a century and is an allegorical commentary on an Orphic theogony, although it opens with the exegesis of a rite relating to the same environment. This text assumes extraordinary importance in terms of the religious significance of *daimones*, and is the subject of extensive literature and different interpretations due to its extremely fragmentary nature. In addition to some occurrences in excessively fragmentary contexts, the mention of these beings as the object of apotropaic propitiatory rites is

clear in Col. VI of the Papyrus. It accompanies the exegesis of the commentator, who identifies '*daimones* hindering' with the 'vengeful souls'. Between the fifth and fourth centuries BCE there was a well-established tradition, with religious implications, that distinguished a class of superhuman beings—the *daimones*—which could be identified with the souls of the dead.

Plutarch tells us that, at Opuntian Locris, there were two priests, 'one of them in charge of the worship of the gods, the other of *daimones*' (*Quaest. graec*. 6.293b–c). At the very beginning of the Hellenistic period several texts addressed to a broad public make it clear that the distinction between gods and *daimones* had, by then, become traditional. We need do no more than recall an exclamation by a character in Menander's *Arbitrator*, 'by the gods and *daimones*' (*Epitr*. 1083; ed. Sandbach 1972: 128, fr. 8) or the orator Aeschines' invocation of 'the earth, the gods, the *daimones* and men' as witnesses (*In Ctes*. 137). It is the funerary inscriptions, however, which provide the clearest proof of the lively presence of *daimones* within the popular religious consciousness (Nowak 1960). There is a series of texts from Asia Minor, and Karia in particular, which may well have ritual implications, despite being expressly funerary. There is plenty of epigraphic evidence, from Karian Olymos, of a public cult and priests of the *Daimones Agathoi* from the first century BCE. These Karian documents, both funerary and cultic, suggest a local form of belief and public worship directed towards a specific category of superhuman beings distinct from the gods. The association between the *Daimones Agathoi* of the Karian chthonic funerary beliefs and practices does not mean that these beings cannot have enjoyed a specific status within the sacred sphere. Moreover, the same conception is present, albeit with lesser frequency and intensity, in other parts of the Greek and Hellenized world, from Athens and several Aegean Islands, to Macedonia, Lykia, Egypt, Arabia, and Rome (Sfameni Gasparro 1997).

Suggested Reading

After Detienne (1963) and Jensen (1966), who emphasize the importance of the Pythagoreans in the history of Greek daimonology, few monographs have been devoted to the theme in recent years. Marx-Wolf (2009, 2011)

investigates the way in which third-century BCE Platonists used daimonology as a *medium* to establish a hierarchy in the realm of spirits and to organize a complex ritual praxis (*theurgia*). Timotin (2011) tracks changes in the notion of *daimon* in the Platonic tradition, from the Old Academy to the last Neoplatonists. He analyses the relationship between daimonology, cosmology, and theories of the soul.

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CHAPTER 29

DEIFICATION—GODS OR MEN?

IVANA PETROVIC

INTRODUCTION: ON HOW KING PTOLEMY BECAME A GOD

IN Lindos, a city on the island of Rhodes in the eastern Mediterranean, there was an important cult of Athena. Among many inscriptions in Athena's sanctuary, one was conspicuous for its length and importance. This text is known as the Lindian Chronicle (*Syll.*^{3} 725 = *FGrH* 532), since it contains a list of dedications of prominent mythical and historical figures to Lindian Athena, starting with the dawn of (Rhodian) time, extending through Greek history—the last legible dedications being those of Hellenistic monarchs. The second part of the inscription records the epiphanies of the goddess Athena, who appeared to the Rhodians in order to aid them in times of great crises. The decree preceding the lists states that the compilers of the Chronicle used various sources from different periods, such as letters and public records. The inscription itself is dated to 99 BCE.

The first in the sequence of recorded epiphanies of Athena is set in the early fifth century BCE, when the island was threatened by Persian invasion. The inscription states:

> When Darius, king of the Persians, sent out great forces for the enslavement of Greece, his naval expedition landed on this first of the islands. When throughout the land people became terrified at the onset of the Persians, some fled together to the most fortified places, but the majority were gathered at Lindos. The enemy established a siege and besieged them, until, on account of the lack of water, the Lindians, being worn down, were of a mind to surrender the city to the enemy. During this time, the goddess, standing over one of the rulers in his sleep, called upon him to be bold, since she was about to ask her father for the much-needed water for them. (Higbie 2003)

The Rhodians asked the Persians for a truce, announcing the imminent miracle of Athena and promising to surrender if it did not occur within five days. Datis, the Persian admiral, laughed, assuming an easy victory, but, the next day, ‘a great dark storm cloud settled over the acropolis and a big storm rained down across the middle and then, beyond belief, the ones besieged had enough water, but the Persian force was in need’. The enemy was astounded at the epiphany of the goddess. Datis immediately dedicated his own ornaments to the goddess and left, but not before declaring that the gods protected and loved the Rhodian people.

The next recorded epiphany takes us to the fourth century BCE, when Athena again intervened and helped the Rhodians cleanse her own cult statue. Athena appeared again in a dream: she stood over a priest in his sleep and commanded him to set the polluted statue out from under the roof, so that her father Zeus could cleanse it with his rain.

The report about the third epiphany of Athena on Rhodes is only fragmentarily preserved. The year is 305 BCE and Rhodes has been besieged by the great general Demetrios I Poliorketes (‘besieger of cities’) for a full year: the Rhodians are getting desperate. Fortunately, their ancestral goddess did not desert them in this hour of need, but appeared to an old priest in a dream. What we now expect, based on the pattern of her previous epiphanies, is an intervention by her father Zeus on behalf of the Rhodians. However, this time Athena did not promise to obtain the help of Zeus. Instead, she advised the Rhodians to ask King Ptolemy to save the city. Athena insisted that Anaxipolis, one of the senior magistrates, ‘writes to King Ptolemy and should invite him to come to the aid of the city, since she would lead and she would secure both victory and dominance’. Initially, the man was reluctant, but when the same vision appeared to him

for six nights in a row, he informed the council members, who decided to contact Ptolemy. Here our text breaks off, but, thanks to literary sources, we know what happened next: according to Diodorus of Sicily (20.96–100) Ptolemy sent both provisions and soldiers to the Rhodians several times, so that Demetrios finally had to give up the siege and a peace settlement was reached. In this situation, Ptolemy assumed the role of Zeus. The sudden appearance of his ships bearing provisions and soldiers must have had a profound effect on the besieged Rhodians—not very different from Zeus' rain in the previous centuries. This, too, was an epiphany in the Greek sense of the word: a sudden manifestation of power, which far surpasses that of an ordinary human, and has a profound effect on the welfare and security of entire communities (see, in this volume, Platt, Chapter 33).

Both Diodorus of Sicily and Pausanias testify that King Ptolemy received divine honours from the Rhodians as a gift of gratitude for helping them defend themselves from Demetrios. Diodorus (20.100.1–5) writes:

> The Rhodians, after they had been besieged for a year, brought the war to an end. Those who had proved themselves brave men in the battles they honoured with the prizes that were their due, and they granted freedom and citizenship to such slaves as had shown themselves courageous. They also set up statues of King Cassander and King Lysimachos, who, though they held second place in general opinion, yet had made great contributions to the salvation of the city. In the case of Ptolemy, since they wanted to surpass his record by repaying his kindness with a greater one, they sent a sacred mission into Libya to ask the oracle at Ammon if it advised the Rhodians to honour Ptolemy as a god. Since the oracle approved, they dedicated in the city a square precinct, building on each of its sides a portico a stade long, and this they called the Ptolemaion. (Geer 1954: 407–9)

Pausanias (1.8.6) testifies that the Rhodians bestowed the title Soter ('saviour') on Ptolemy. This cult title is widely attested for divinities which tend to appear to humans in the hour of their need, such as Dioskouroi, Herakles, or Asklepios.

This chapter will discuss the emergence of the ruler cult in the Hellenistic period, the way the cult of rulers was instituted and modelled upon that of divinities, the agency, origins, and early manifestations of deification, and its implications on the way the Roman emperors were deified. What was the reason for elevating mere humans to the status of divinities? Was this a sign of decline of traditional Greek religion? What was the procedure for introducing such cults and whose was the initiative?

A Brief History of Scholarship and Current Tendencies

The view of deification had changed significantly in the second half of the twentieth century. Up until the studies of Habicht (1970) and Price (1984), the prevailing view of scholars was that the cult of rulers was a symptom of the religious bankruptcy of the Hellenistic world. Its goal was simply flattery: it indicated the subordination of those who had set it up, and its rituals were empty of real feeling and genuine religious sentiment. Habicht conducted an analysis of the process of bestowing divine honours on Hellenistic rulers by Greek cities and proposed a new view of deification. He placed it in the context of the existing Greek system of honouring outstanding members of a community. Since the power of the Hellenistic kings placed them in a position far superior to any mortals thus far, enabling them to provide considerable benefits to communities, the honours they were due had to surpass any former markers of prestige. In order to express their gratitude for services rendered, the Greeks awarded the kings the highest possible honours, hitherto reserved for and restricted to divinities.

Price (1984) offered an astute analysis of the Christian biases that tend to blur our view of ancient deification, and posited that the process of deification was merely one of the ways in which the conception of the new Roman emperor was 'constructed' in the East. Building on Habicht's discussion of the place of the ruler in the traditional Greek hierarchy of honours, Price argued that a deification of a ruler was a way to accommodate him within the indigenous traditional honorific system, which classified and provided outward signals of the power of an individual.

Both Habicht and Price set new parameters for the analysis of the ruler cult as an honorific practice and as a phenomenon residing between religion and politics. This approach also advanced the debate, because it took into consideration an important difference between Judeo-Christian dogma, in which the dichotomy between humanity and deity is very stark, and the Greco-Roman concept of a god, which is much more ambiguous and flexible. Anthropomorphic divinities are, by definition, much closer to

the human sphere. Greek gods were conceptualized as more powerful than humans (but not all-powerful!), and, though usually perceived as immortal, there are significant exceptions to this rule. In the Greek pantheon there existed a whole range of divinities. This system also had a hierarchy, which classified the gods according to their power and significance. Accordingly, the Greek concept of deification was also flexible and could encompass varying degrees of closeness to the divine.

If the crucial difference between humans and gods is simply the amount of power they possess, then a way exists for humans to breach the boundaries of divinity and ascend towards the divine sphere. In the case of King Ptolemy, this happened in a specific moment, due to particular circumstances. The king's demonstration of power was acknowledged by the community, which expressed its gratitude for salvation and restored safety by equating Ptolemy's demonstration of power to a divine epiphany. This opened the path towards treating Ptolemy just like other divinities with the power to resolve a critical situation, bringing salvation and protecting the community. A cult epithet was bestowed and the usual honours and commemorations of divine intervention took place.

Current scholarship tends to perceive the question of belief in the divinity of rulers as irrelevant (see e.g. Walbank 1987; Koenen 1993; Melaerts 1998; Chaniotis 2003, 2011; Burrell 2004; Dreyer 2009; Caneva 2012). Instead, scholars tend to focus on aspects such as the agency, the performance of rituals, and their commemoration, as recorded in the literary, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence. Since, in Greek polytheism, the communication with divinities was based on a system of gift exchange (according to the principle of reciprocity, '*do ut des*'), modern approaches to the cult of rulers tend to focus on the system of exchange, and to analyse the honorific activities centred on the cult. The 'divine' rulers are perceived to occupy the position between humans and the gods, and attempt to negotiate the boundaries between the human and divine spheres.

TIMAI: THE GREEK HIERARCHY OF HONOURS

Ancient Greek communities had a highly developed, sophisticated system of honouring individuals. An often-quoted passage illustrating this hierarchy of honours is from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1.5.9 (1361a):

> Honour is a token of a reputation for doing good; and those who have already done good are justly and above all honoured (. . .) Doing good relates either to personal security and all the causes of existence; or to wealth; or to any other good things which are not easy to acquire, either in any conditions, or at such a place, or at such a time; for many obtain honour for things that appear trifling, but this depends upon place and time. The components of honour are sacrifices, memorials in verse and prose, privileges, grants of land, front seats, public burial, state maintenance, and among the barbarians, prostration and giving place, and all gifts which are highly prized in each country. (Freese 1926: 53)

This principle applies well to the Rhodian situation: since King Ptolemy played a decisive role in the preservation of the city, saving it from Demetrios, he demonstrated power of a sort that the Greeks could only equate with divine power. The gratitude for such an act demanded honours which surpass those reserved for humans. In the passage of Diodorus quoted in the Introduction, we can also see that everyone was elevated in status: slaves received freedom and citizenship, Kings Cassander and Lysimachus, who had also helped the Rhodians with provisions during the siege, were honoured with statues, but a special, greater reward is reserved for the one who helped the Rhodians—divine honours.

GREEK CITIES AS AGENTS OF DEIFICATION

In the early Hellenistic period, the cult of rulers was established at the initiative of the cities. Greek cities introduced the worship of *living* rulers. However, as Habicht (1970: 160–71) pointed out, the honours which cities used to bestow on Hellenistic kings were not divine, but 'equal to divine' (*isotheoi timai*). The ambiguity of this expression signals that there was a perceived difference between being a god and being honoured like a god. Hellenistic rulers were honoured like the gods in many cities, but that does not mean that the cities perceived them as ontologically identical to divinities.

Nevertheless, they seem to have been perceived as very close to the gods. Some of the honours they received were directly adopted from the cult of the gods: just like in the introduction of new cults, the first step in introducing a ruler cult was often the consultation of an oracle. Upon gaining the oracle's consent, the city would issue a decree specifying the honours (*timai*) for the deified ruler: a priest of the cult, an enclosure (*temenos*) to be set up, a shrine with an altar as a focal point of the sacrificial ritual, a festival in honour of the king. This process corresponds to the procedure of introducing new gods, and the associated rituals, such as sacrifice, processions, and festivals, correspond to those for divinities. However, there was an important difference between divine and ruler cult: almost no temples were erected for the rulers. Instead of building a separate temple for the new ruler-god, it was usual to place a statue in an existing sanctuary. Kings were worshipped as *sunnaoi* ('temple-sharing divinities').

The language of Greek religious ritual was perfectly suitable for expressing the superhuman influence and power that kings possessed in the eyes of the cities that worshipped them. *Soter* is the most common epithet of Hellenistic divinized kings, and reflects the reasons for introducing their cult. It was attributed to the following kings: Antigonos Monophthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes in Athens; Dion in Syracuse; Seleukos I on Lemnos; Antiochos I in Ilion, Bargylia, Smyrna; Ptolemy I on Rhodes, Naxos, League of Islanders, Miletos.

In state cult, the same epithet was attributed to Ptolemy I, Antigonos Gonatas, Attalos I, Achaios, Philip V, Eumenes I, Seleukos III, Ptolemy IX, and Cleopatra.

Considering the importance of the agency of the polis for the introduction of the cult of a living ruler, it is hardly a coincidence that the protection of cities is represented as the main task of the gods and the kings in Hellenistic poetry. The passage from Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* (1.79–83), which offers a very good parallel to the Lindian Chronicle, is typical:

> Kings come from Zeus, for nothing is more divine than Zeus' kings. Zeus, this is why you chose kings for your own lot, and gave them cities to guard, while you yourself sit at the high places of cities, and observe those who rule the people with crooked judgements, and also those who rule justly.

Another prominent motif in Hellenistic art and literature is the closeness of the ruler to the gods. The divinized kings are often represented as an incarnation and manifestation of the divine powers: their actions reflect the will of the gods, so the deeds of the kings are depicted as equivalent to epiphanies of gods. The Lindian Chronicle demonstrates that the kings were very close to the gods in two ways: the gods summoned kings as their helpers, so that we can say that, in the case of Rhodes, King Ptolemy and goddess Athena worked together, side by side. Secondly, compared with the first two epiphanic narratives in the Chronicle, in the third story Ptolemy assumes the role of Zeus (and gains Zeus' cult title, Soter, as a reward for this act). There is a significant number of passages in Hellenistic poetry in which the close collaboration of the king and the god is stressed. For instance, in his *Hymn to Delos*, Callimachus famously depicts god Apollo and King Ptolemy II as victorious in the joint war against the Celts (4.160–88), and in his *Hymn to Apollo*, the poet announces (2.25–7): 'It is a bad thing to fight with the blessed gods—he who fights the blessed ones would fight with my king; he who fights my king would fight Apollo himself!'

These passages represent Ptolemaic propaganda, but the propaganda was based on the common perception that the king's deeds can be seen as a manifestation of divine will. Rather than undermining traditional religious belief, the cult of kings therefore fits well into the already existing divine order. This was also reflected by the positioning of royal statues as sunnaoi of the gods. In some cases, the proximity to the divine sphere was also reflected in the ontological status of the living ruler. Some Hellenistic kings, such as Alexander the Great, Seleukos I, or Ptolemy I, even spread the idea that they were direct offspring of the gods. King Seleukos I was praised as a son of Apollo in a hymn preserved at Erythrai, dated to 281 bce (*I.Erythrai* 205.74–6): 'Praise with hymns during the libations Seleukos, pais ('servant' or 'child') of the

dark-haired Apollo, whom the player of the golden lyre himself begot.'

The most prominent mythological example of *apotheosis* (change of status from human to divine) in the ancient Greek world was Herakles. He was one of the most popular Greek heroes, son of Zeus and a mortal queen, who accomplished many heroic tasks with the help of the goddess Athena,

and received divine status after his death. His elevation amongst the immortals as a reward for heroic deeds made Herakles an ideal model for Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic rulers. Herakles plays a prominent role in Hellenistic poetry, cropping up everywhere—in Callimachus, Theokritos, Apollonios, and many lost Hellenistic poems we know by name only. A typical passage which demonstrates the way the myth of Herakles was linked to the worship of the deified ruler is from Theokritos, *Idyll* 17, an *encomion* ('praise poem') of Ptolemy II Philadelphos. In the following passage, the honours Zeus bestowed on Herakles are paralleled to the status of Alexander and Ptolemy (16–27):

> Him the father made equal in honour even to the blessed immortals, and a golden throne is built for him in the house of Zeus; beside him, kindly disposed, sits Alexander, the god of the dancing diadem, who brought destruction to the Persians. Facing them is established the seat of centaur-slaying Herakles, fashioned from solid adamant. There he joins in feasting with the heavenly ones and rejoices exceedingly in the grandsons of his grandsons, for the son of Kronos has removed old age from their limbs, and his very own descendants are called immortal. Both (Alexander and Ptolemy I) have as ancestor the mighty son of Herakles, and both trace their family back in the end to Herakles. (Hunter 2003: 79)

Herakles is represented as a direct model for both Alexander and Ptolemy I. All three boasted divine parentage, all enjoy immortality as a reward for their heroic deeds, all feast together, and Alexander and Ptolemy are even represented as Herakles' scions.

The closeness of the king to the gods could also be expressed metaphorically, such as in the following example. One of the important and often discussed sources for the ruler cult is a hymn composed for the Hellenistic king Demetrios Poliorketes. It was performed by the Athenians in 291 or 290 BCE to celebrate the king's return to the city, and is an excellent illustration of the '*do ut des*' principle upon which the cult of rulers was based (Ath. 6.63 = Douris *FrGH* F13):

> How the greatest and dearest of the gods are present in our city! For the circumstances have brought together Demeter and Demetrius; she comes to celebrate the solemn mysteries of the Kore, while he is here full of joy, as befits the god, fair and laughing. His appearance is solemn, his friends all around him and he in their midst, as though they were stars and he the sun. Hail boy of the most powerful god Poseidon and Aphrodite! For other gods are either far away, or they do not have ears, or they do not exist, or do not take any notice of us, but you we can see present here, not made of wood or stone, but real. So we pray to you: first make peace, dearest; for you have the power. And then, the Sphinx that rules not only over Thebes but over the whole of Greece, the Aitolian sphinx sitting on a rock like the ancient one, who seizes and carries away all our people, and I cannot fight against her —for it is an Aitolian custom to seize the property of neighbors and now even what is afar;

> most of all punish her yourself; if not, find an Oedipus who will either hurl down that sphinx from the rocks or reduce her to ashes. (Chaniotis 2011: 160)

When King Demetrios returned to Athens, the citizens welcomed him with incense, garlands, and libations. Processional and ithyphallic choruses met him, dancing and singing. Demetrios was treated just like a god, and this way of marking the *adventus* ('arrival') of the king later became a model not only for Roman rulers, but was also influential for Christian liturgy. This text provides important evidence about the type of communication Greeks attempted to establish with their divinized kings. Of course, all religious rituals are based on an attempt to establish a communication with the divine, but, in the case of divinized rulers, the worshippers were in a unique situation, since they could be certain that the divinity addressed really was in attendance and could hear their prayers. This is very probably the reason why the Athenians so remarkably single out Demetrios as the one god who is truly present: 'For other gods are either far away, or they do not have ears, or they do not exist, or do not take any notice of us, but you we can see present here, not made of wood or stone, but real.' Does this statement mean that the Athenians ceased to believe in their ancestral gods? If we analyse the poem in the context of the genre of Greek hymns, it becomes clear that hymns tend to single out and praise as unique whatever god they happen to be focused on. Demetrios is praised not as the *only* god, but as the only god the Athenians *can see*, not represented by a statue, or enacted by a priest, but present. Accordingly, the communication with a divinized king is more direct than with other divinities. Having greeted Demetrios, the Athenians immediately proceed to present themselves as weak and destitute, and Demetrios as immensely powerful and the only one who can help them, as they request a military intervention on their behalf at the end of the hymn: 'So we pray to you: first make peace, dearest; for you have the power. And then, the Sphinx that rules not only over Thebes but over the whole of Greece, the Aitolian sphinx (. . .) I cannot fight against her (. . .) punish her.'

The motif of a weak city in need of royal protection is a recurring theme in the communication between cities and their divinized kings. Be it a letter, or a public decree, the cities honour royal benefactors in order to elicit future benefactions, and in order to set an example for other monarchs. The passive-aggressive tone of this communication is hard to

miss. After all, compared with the Greek gods, the divinized rulers were in an inferior position, since they were present and tangible and could not pretend they had not heard the mortal requests. Since their divinity was based on visible demonstrations of their power, lack of demonstration of power on their part would endanger and diminish their position.

Another recurring theme in the deification discourse is the closeness of the ruler to the Olympian gods. Some kings, like Ptolemy Soter or Alexander the Great, disseminated stories about their divine parentage. Some kings were associated with the divinities more loosely. Demetrios carefully timed his return to Athens to coincide with the Eleusinian mysteries. The hymn celebrates him as the son of Poseidon and Aphrodite, probably allegorically, alluding to his formidable fleet and his famous good looks. The hymn also stresses his closeness to Demeter, not only because of the etymology of his name, but also because Demetrios had previously made gifts of corn to Athenians (Chaniotis 2011).

ROYAL ADMINISTRATION AS AN AGENT OF DEIFICATION

The paradox of mortal divinity becomes even more puzzling when we consider that King Ptolemy I was honoured like a god at Rhodes, Delos, Naxos, Kalymnos, and Miletos during his lifetime, but at home, in Egypt, he was worshipped only *after* he had died. While Greek cities introduced cults of living rulers, the royal administration at first only assigned divine honours to deceased family members of the rulers. Later on, living monarchs become deified as well. This process is best attested for the Ptolemaic dynasty.

Ptolemy I famously seized the body of Alexander the Great and built a shrine for the king in the newly founded metropolis, Alexandria. Alexander was venerated as the official state god, and Menelaus, Ptolemy's brother, became his eponymous priest (the priest who gives the name to the year). The priesthood of Alexander was attested already in 285/4 BCE (*P.Eleph.* 2). Divine Alexander played a prominent role in

Ptolemaic propaganda: he appears on coins; his image was carried in processions; court poets such as Theokritos (Id. 17) mention him alongside the Ptolemies. Propagation of Alexander's cult helped to create an impression of continuity for Ptolemaic royals, but it also prepared a path for their own cultic veneration.

When Ptolemy I died in 283 BCE, his son and heir, Ptolemy II Philadelphos (309–246 BCE) proclaimed him as a god. Ptolemy I was worshipped under the title Soter, and penteteric isolympic games (repeated every four years, equal in status to the Olympic Games) called Ptolemaia were instituted in his honour. The magnificent procession Ptolemy II organized as part of this festival was described in detail by Callixeinos of Rhodes a century after the event, and is transmitted as an excerpt in Athenaeus' *Deiphnosophistai* (*FGrH* 627 F 2 = Ath. 5.197c–203b). To this cult was attached that of Soter's deceased wife Berenice in 279 BCE. The couple was worshipped as Theoi Soteres ('the saviour gods').

In the fourteenth year of his reign, in 272/1 BCE, Ptolemy II introduced the cult of living rulers by announcing himself and his sister-wife Arsinoe II to be divine, under the name Theoi Adelphoi ('brother–sister gods'). Their cult was appended to that of Alexander the Great and became a part of the state dynastic cult. From that time on, the eponymous priest was called: 'The priest of Alexander and the Brother-Sister gods'. Every subsequent royal couple was divinized in the same way: Ptolemy III and his spouse became Theoi Euergetai ('benefactor gods'); Ptolemy IV and his wife were venerated as Theoi Philopatores ('father-loving gods'). During the reign of Ptolemy IV, the cult of Theoi Soteres was also attached to the cult of Alexander, and became a part of the official dynastic cult. After this, the full title of the eponymous priest also contained the full royal succession list: 'Priest of Alexander and the Saviour gods, and the Brother-Sister gods, and the Benefactor Gods, and the Father-Loving gods'. The cult of the royal couple and their predecessors was adopted by the local population, and cult statues of divine kings were placed in the Egyptian temples, where they received the usual sacrificial offerings.

The divine self-proclamation, the establishment of a cult of a living monarch across an entire kingdom by the ruler himself, was a Seleukid speciality, first attested in the case of Antiochos III the Great (who ruled from 222–187 BCE).

The Antigonids, who ruled over traditional Greek areas, did not introduce the cult of monarch themselves, but they did accept divine honours offered by the Greek cities.

The acquisition of divine status manifested itself in the daily life of Hellenistic kings, in their habitat, presentation, and accessibility. Evidence for the Ptolemaic royal cult is particularly rich, but we have good grounds to assume that the self-presentation of other Hellenistic monarchs was organized along the same principles. The Ptolemaic capital, Alexandria, was devised with presentation in mind: the vast and lavish palace complex served as a stage for presenting the royal couple as divinities. The Ptolemies lived in a complex palace which was physically connected to several shrines—that of Alexander and the Muses, for example. The vicinity of the famous library also conveyed the impression of a sacred space, since, in Ancient Greece, libraries were traditionally attached to great temples. As we know from Theokritos (15), the royal palace was occasionally open to the general public on special, festive days. Admitting the citizens to the palace on the occasion of festivals was probably a conscious strategy on the part of the kings, with the aim of demonstrating the similarity of their palaces to the temples of Greek gods, which were also opened on festive days. The result of this strategy was an association of royal appearance with divine epiphany.

Seeing the god, in the form of a statue or a priest, was a pinnacle of Greek religious festivals. Such epiphanies were carefully staged. Hellenistic kings adopted this mode of self-presentation: they celebrated festivals in which their own statues were carried in processions together with divine images. Parallels between divine epiphanies and the staged appearances of kings were also noted by Diotogenes, the author of the treatise *Peri Basileias* (‘On the Kingship’). Diotogenes characterized ideal kingship as ‘an imitation of the gods’ and recommended that the monarch set himself apart from human failings and ‘astonish the onlookers by his staged appearances and studied pose’ (quoted in Stob. 4.7.62, my translation).

However, royal cults were not only a matter of political propaganda. Some became widely popular. A case in point is the cult of Arsinoe II, daughter of Ptolemy I and wife of her own brother, Ptolemy II. During her lifetime, Arsinoe was identified with the Egyptian goddess Isis, and the Greek Aphrodite Euploia (‘of good sailing’) and Zephyritis (‘of the west

wind'). High-ranking court officials, such as General Kallikrates, dedicated temples in her honour; court poets Posidippos and Callimachus celebrated her as a goddess. After her death, Arstinoe's cult was attached to that of Alexander the Great. On coins, she is represented with the horns of Ammon. By royal decree, Arsinoe II became the temple-sharing divinity of all Egyptian gods; port Fayum and numerous other ports in the Aegean were renamed Arsinoites in her honour; games called Arsinoeia and Philadelpheia were instituted and performed in her memory; and her cult spread throughout the Aegean, where it remained popular long after her death. Private altars of Arsinoe were attested as far as Eretria and Miletos. (On the cults of Arsinoe II, see Caneva 2012.)

RULER CULT AS A COHESIVE FORCE

Hellenistic kingdoms were vast and multinational. In the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms, the ruling class of Macedonians and Greeks was a minority. Different nations united under their rule had varying ideas about kingship and diverse religious backgrounds. Amongst many different gods these nations venerated, the cult of kings was a common element they could share. The worship of the living king, or the deceased members of the royal dynasty, must have had a cohesive power, providing a common object of veneration for all nations of the kingdom, irrespective of their native origin.

This also applies to the ruling class consisting of Greeks and Macedonians. They were displaced, having left their cities of origin, and had to form new communities in new territories. In the Archaic and Classical periods, common worship of the gods and the celebration of regional festivals were important duties of every citizen. Polis cults were an important element of cohesion, serving as a basis of a polis identity. A good illustration of this idea is found in Plato's *Laws* (738b–e), in which he remarks that an important benefit of joint participation in rituals is that it promotes fraternization among citizens in their communities. In the same way, royal cults, such as that of Arsinoe II, contributed to the cohesion of the Ptolemaic empire, and were popular amongst Greek and

native populations alike. This wide appeal was facilitated by the innate polyvalence and polysemy of the religious symbols of monarchic propaganda. Divine attributes and representations were often adapted to local sensibilities. For instance, the cult titles of Ptolemaic kings were clear and understandable to the Greek population, but they also had distinctive connotations for the Egyptians, as they alluded to or directly adopted the ancient pharaonic titulature (Koenen 1993). For instance, 'Soter' and 'Euergetes' were names recalling the Greek honours for men who had served their city in an extraordinary way, but they also evoked Egyptian ideas of kingship. The Egyptian pharaoh was also a divine protector of the country. Soter (saviour) is also the meaning of the Egyptian pharaonic title *nb.tj*. Another Egyptian word for the same idea appears in the titulary extant in the Temple of Philae: Shed, 'saviour'. Similarly, the transcription for 'Euergetes' is derived from *mnḫ*, an epithet of King Snofru (fourth dynasty). (On the Ptolemaic royal titulature and its hieroglyphic equivalents, see Koenen 1993.)

Likewise, Apollo the archer, one of the prominent symbols of the Seleucid dynasty, and the alleged father of the first king, Seleukos, was seen as a typically Greek divinity by the Greeks, but he also had affinities to the Mesopotamian and Iranian sun gods, and even tapped into the ancient Eastern traditions of the royal archer as a symbol of divine kingship (Iossif 2011).

As a medium of communication between the rulers and their subjects, and as a way to enforce and legitimize dynastic power, the Hellenistic royal cult was an extremely successful strategy. The Roman ruler cult was, in many ways, based on Hellenistic royal propaganda, especially in the Greek East (Price 1984).

DEIFICATION BEFORE THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

To appreciate the remarkable nature of the ruler cult, we have to recognize that, before the Hellenistic period, deification of living or deceased

humans was very rare (see in detail, in this volume, Ekroth, Chapter 26). A hero-cult was a common way for a community to acknowledge that an individual had reached such a prominent status, that he or she continued to exert an influence even after death. However, Currie (2005) has challenged the view that death was a necessary precondition for a hero-cult. He argued that, as early as in the fifth century BCE, some communities treated exceptional living persons with honours similar to hero-cult, and that those individuals went on to receive worship after death (e.g., Dion, the Syracusan tyrant (408–354 BCE) or the Athenian general Hagnon, who was venerated at Amphipolis, a city he founded in 437/6 BCE). Euthymos, a fifth-century BCE boxer from Locri, reportedly received heroic cult during his lifetime (see Currie 2005: 120–9, 136–7, 166–7).

In some cases, it is difficult to ascertain whether the honours in questions were heroic or divine, but it is significant to note that, in the Classical age, we already encounter precedents for the phenomenon of ruler cult: the concept of the saviour and benefactor, imitation by living persons of gods and heroes, and the sharing of humans in a god's festival and sanctuary. Gelon and other Sicilian rulers in the first half of the fifth century BCE (Theron, Hieron) received posthumous hero-cults, but, according to Currie (2005: 170–2), popular attitudes to these rulers while they were alive already anticipated Hellenistic ruler cults: Gelon was lauded as a benefactor and saviour; Dionysios I assumed Dionysiac iconography in his statues; Dion received heroic honours during his lifetime. The Samians also bestowed divine honours on the Spartan general Lysandros, as a gift of gratitude for his military assistance in 404 BCE. In the Macedonian dynasty, divine honours were allotted to King Amyntas III, his son Philip II, and his grandson Alexander the Great during their lifetime. However, the divinity attributed to Alexander was a path-breaking phenomenon, since he not only demonstrated exceptional power and agility, imitating—and occasionally surpassing!—Herakles and Dionysos, but had also claimed a divine father. Alexander both received divine honours from Greek cities and was proclaimed divine by the royal administration shortly before his death in Babylon. The cult of Alexander was very popular and persisted long after his death, both in Greek cities and in Hellenistic kingdoms, thanks to the support of the royal administration. Hellenistic cities upheld the rituals and kept repairing his

shrines until well into the Roman period. Even Roman emperors supported Alexander's cult, especially the Severan dynasty.

Apart from the kings, examples of the apotheosis of living or deceased humans are rare in the Classical and early Hellenistic period. The early fifth-century BCE athlete Theagenes was honoured as a healing god on Thasos after his death, but it is unclear when exactly this cult originated. Homer was an object of a widespread hero-cult; in Alexandria, he received a temple and divine honours during the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator. In the late Hellenistic period, divine honours were also allotted to members of the polis elite who had distinguished themselves as benefactors.

The idea of mortal divinity was already a topic of discussion in Greek philosophy in the Classical age. Sophist Prodikos (465–395 BCE) was among the first Greek philosophers to propose that the origin of some cults should be sought in the extraordinary honours primitive societies had allotted to some remarkable humans, such as the first inventors of useful skills and cultural achievements (DK 84 B 5). The Sicilian philosopher Empedokles (490–430 BCE) even claimed that he himself was divine:

> My friends, who dwell in the great city sloping down to yellow Akragas, hard by the citadel, busied with goodly works, all hail! I go about among you an immortal god, no more a mortal, so honored of all, as is meet, crowned with fillets and flowery garlands. Straightway as soon as I enter with these, men and women, into flourishing towns, I am reverenced and tens of thousands follow, to learn where is the path which leads to welfare, some desirous of oracles, others suffering from all kinds of diseases, desiring to hear a message of healing. (DK 31 B 112.42 = VS 31 F 112, Diog. Laert. 8.62; trans. Hicks 1925)

Empedokles maintained that healers, prophets, poets, and rulers can become gods due to their benefactions to mankind (DK 31 B 146 = VS 31 F 146 = Clem. Al. *Strom.* 4.150.1). During his lifetime, Empedokles was received and honoured like a god by the people in some communities he visited (though we do not have sources for instituting an official cult).

Aristotle's ideas about the remarkable position a king has in a community were probably influential in the formation of the cults of kings in Greek cities (*Pol*. 1284a 3–14):

> But if there is any one man so greatly distinguished in outstanding virtue (. . .) so that the virtue of all the rest and their political ability is not comparable with that of the men mentioned (. . .) it is no longer proper to count these exceptional men a part of the state; for they will be treated unjustly if deemed worthy of equal status, being so widely unequal in virtue and in their political ability: since such a man will naturally be as a god among men. (Rackham 1932: 241)

Hekataios of Abdera and Euhemeros of Messene espoused the most notorious and influential early Hellenistic thoughts about the origins of divine cults. They advanced the idea that there were original gods (*theoi ouranioi*, 'celestial gods') and humans who were divinized due to their services to mankind (*theoi epigeioi*, 'earthly divinities').

CONCLUSION

We can see that, both in Greek philosophy and cult practice, a special role was reserved for outstanding sovereigns. The worship they received was not perceived as rivalling the traditional gods, nor was it a threat to what we refer to as 'traditional religion'. The cults for living or deceased rulers were integrated in the religious life of a community and become more frequent in the Hellenistic period, as a reflex of the changed historical circumstances, which elevate singular rulers or entire families to a position of almost unrestricted power and influence. Whereas previous scholarship saw the boundary between the human and the divine as impenetrable, and the cult of rulers in the Hellenistic period as a manifestation of the decline of traditional Greek religion, modern scholars see the barrier between two areas as fluid and negotiable, and interpret the popularity of the ruler cult in the Hellenistic period as a product of a time in which the powers of an individual could be manifested in a way similar to divine intervention. Hellenistic kings had the power to affect whole communities in a hitherto unattested ways. Their acts can be compared to divine interventions, and the honours allotted to them reflected their status and power in the eyes of the community that bestowed them.

SUGGESTED READING

For an accessible and exhaustive historical overview with lists of sources, see Buraselis 2004. For an excellent introduction, see Chaniotis 2003. On the hero-cult and early forms of deification, see Currie 2005 and Walbank 1987. On the cult of Alexander the Great, see Dreyer 2009. On the cult of

Ptolemaic kings, Koenen 1993, Melaerts 1998, and Huss 2001. On the Ptolemeic royal ideology as reflected in the procession of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, see Rice 1983. On the cult of Seleucid rulers, see Van Nuffelen 2004.

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PART VII

WHAT?

CHAPTER 30

PRAYER AND CURSE

HENDRIK S. VERSNEL

INTRODUCTION

THIS chapter, as the title indicates, addresses two different but related issues. One of our tasks will be to give a summarizing 'encyclopaedic' description of each. However, this cannot be done before we have explored the question of whether and to what extent the modern concepts 'prayer' and 'curse' have corresponding terms in the Greek language. This will turn out to provoke another question, namely, in what respects these two Greek notions mutually concurred or differed. Apart from these two major issues, a third one invites attention: the question of continuity. Can we observe shifts in forms, contents, or uses over time, and, if so, can we explain them?

PRAYER

Terms

The Greek terms that we generally translate as ‘pray/prayer’ are *euchomai/euche*. Being addresses to—and, as such, immediate forms of communication with—god or gods, these notions represent the most common type of religious expression. As so often, however, it soon appears that Greek and English terms do not always cover precisely the same set of senses or uses. Differences can be traced in both origins and developments of the semantics of the terms. The English ‘pray’ stems from late Latin *precare* ‘entreat’, and has inherited its basic sense of (solemn) request. The earliest senses of Greek *euchomai*, as we meet them in Homer, are twofold. In a generic, non-religious discourse the term occurs in the sense of ‘profess loudly, boast, vaunt’, more specifically, ‘boast of something one has right to be proud of’ (Pulleyn 1997: 59–64). In a religious context it means ‘pray (loudly)’, mostly in the sense of ‘addressing a god with a request’. The original sense of *euchomai* that may have given rise to the two, in our eyes so diverse, uses of the term is the subject of scholarly discussion. Perhaps it is ‘solemn speech’ or, more specifically, ‘solemnly expressed claim’ (find a good discussion of the history of the term in Depew 1997: 230–4).

It is the ‘entreating’ sense of the word that rose to monopoly in Greek religion. And it is this use of *euchomai* that also, in Homer, already engendered another meaning, which was to enjoy a great future. This is ‘vow, promise’, and refers to the reward the god might expect after fulfilling the wish (Van Straten 1981; Boardman 2004; Bodel and Kajava 2009). This is one of the most characteristic instances of reciprocity in the relationship between humans and gods in Greek religious practice. In this context, the word *euche* even came to denote the concrete gift offered to the gods by way of redemption of the vow itself. It occurs in hundreds of votive inscriptions of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. *Euchen anetheka* does not mean ‘I dedicated my prayer’, nor even ‘I dedicated my vow’, but ‘I dedicated the gift that I promised/vowed’ (just as Latin *votum dedi*).

While other Greek words for ‘entreat/implore/beseech’, such as *lissomai* (Aubriot-Sévin 1992: 405–92) and, more strongly, *hiketeuo* (Canciani and Pellizer 2005), differ from *euchomai* in that they are not restricted to the domain of religion, there is a second word group which is generally used in a religious context. This is *ara/araomai*, one of whose

meanings concurs with our concept of ‘pray/prayer’ (Aubriot-Sévin 1992: 295–404). Here too, however, its semantic history betrays a gradual shift. In Homer, *araomai* seems to be semantically identical to *euchomai* in the sense of ‘loudly express a wish, either positive or negative, whose fulfilment does not lie in the hands of man’ (*LfgrE* 1168 ff.). Over the course of time, however, for malevolent wishes, which we tend to associate with the notion ‘curse’, preference was given to the words *ara/araomai* (Corlu 1966: 283ff., Pulleyn 1997: 71–7). Nonetheless, *araomai* and *euchomai*, the latter especially in its compositions *kateuchomai* and *epeuchomai* (Graf 2005a: 248), continue sharing both positive and negative aspects. In Aischylos’ *Choephoroi* 142–6, in a prayer (first called *euchai*) to her deceased father, Electra expressly includes both a wish for blessing for herself and a request to do evil to her enemies, specifying the first as *arai kalai* (good *arai*), the second as *are kake* (bad *ara*). We shall return to this in the section ‘Curse’.

Forms

By way of introduction let us single out the earliest instance of an independent formal prayer, namely the oft-quoted prayer (the Greek term used here is a form of *araomai*) of Apollo’s priest Chryses (called both *hiereus* and *areter* in the immediate context)—who has been wronged by Agamemnon, lord of the Achaeans—to his god in Homer *Ilias* 1.37–43:

> Hear me you of the silverbow, who have under your
> protection Chryse
> and sacred Cilla, and who rule mightily over Tenedos,
> Smintheus, if ever I roofed over a pleasing shrine for
> you,
> or if ever I burned to you thigh pieces
> of bulls and goats, fulfill for me this wish:
> let the Danaans pay for my tears by your arrows.
> (Murray 1924)

This brief prayer presents a complete set of elements often deemed to be constitutive of (formal) ancient prayer, whose classic threefold division

into *invocatio*, *pars epica*, and *precatio*, introduced by Ausfeld in 1903, is still widely used. The *invocatio* evokes the attention of the god. In it, the god is addressed by name, often with his cult name(s), patronymica, habitual residence, functions, and qualities. This part serves both identification and, ever more emphatically over the course of time, also the honorification of the deity in question (Versnel 2011: 53–7). The second part, called *pars epica* by Ausfeld, contains the 'argument'—a term now often preferred over the old Latin one—consisting of considerations that might persuade a god to help, for example, by a reminder of the praying person's acts of piety, or a reference to the god's earlier benefactions or his natural inclination to help people. The third part is the *precatio* proper, the petition. As noted, the great majority of both public and private prayers contain a wish.

However, a few notes of warning are in order. First, the scheme is not obligatory: we do not know of any official/liturgical prescription concerning this prayer structure: 'Greek religion had no Book of Common Prayer' (Pulleyn 1997: 149). The few 'complete' schemes that we do possess, as the one just cited, are restricted to formal prayer in literary texts, especially in Homer (Aubriot 1991). As a matter of fact, to find more examples we must resort to the hymn (for a basic collection: Furley and Bremer 2001; see also, in this volume, Calame, Chapter 13), a category sometimes, and to a certain extent correctly, called 'sung prayer', that in this respect is far more informative. Hymns in religious contexts were mainly intended as praises of the god. Conventional features were lists of the god's powers and qualities as well as cult places. Increasingly extended strings of epithets mark the hymnody of imperial times. In the earliest so-called 'Homeric' hymns (seventh and sixth centuries bce) 'invocation' and 'argument' already tended to amalgamate into independent extended narrations about the god's birth and acquisition of his *timai* ('honours') (Furley 1995). Next to this, a special type of prayer formularies, intended for public recitation and concomitant requirements concerning the qualities of the praying persons, emerges in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Klinghardt 1999). Finally, the few extant prayers that explicitly belong to a cultic context all betray a much simpler form (Aubriot-Sévin 1992: 36f.; Pulleyn 1997: 149f.). Most famous is the two-word prayer *hue kue*, 'rain, conceive', a formula spoken by the initiates at the mysteries (Proclus *In Ti*. 3.176, 26ff.; Hippol. *Haer*. 5.7.34.87

Wendland). There were also linguistically meaningless—though not senseless—sounds which accompanied certain dances and processions and which could be interpreted as invocations of the god, such as *ololuge*, *thriambe*, *euhoi*, *paian*. They could even develop into the name of a god: the cry *iakche* became the divine name *Iakchos*. All this proves Origen's *Peri euches* (Koetschau 1899, I.II.1) to be right when it says: 'One thing, I am convinced, belongs to the impossibilities, namely to make clear the whole of prayer in a precise manner, meet for god.'

Contexts, Motives, and Motifs

Greek prayers, like modern ones, could be formal (official) or informal (as often in private contexts). Generally, official prayer was connected with other acts of worship, most prominently sacrifice. With few exceptions animal sacrifices were offered in honour of god(s) or hero(es), hence were hardly conceivable without a formal prayer in which at least the first and third elements played a part. Ancient prayer used to be spoken aloud in accordance with the early meaning of *euchomai*. Silent or whispered prayer was reserved for offensive, indecent, erotic, or magical uses, but was later adopted as the normal rule in Christian practice. Kneeling down (often associated with the notions of *hiketeuo/hiketeia*) though not unknown (Van Straten 1974) was unusual, the gesture of entreaty being outstretched arms with the hands directed to the god invoked or to his religious cult image (Jakov and Voutiras 2005: 120–3).

If we now turn to the contents and contexts of ancient Greek prayer we will focus on the following central questions—'*Who* was addressed, *how*, and for *what*'—in other words, *invocatio* and *preces*.

Who? The question of choice in a polytheistic religion might seem insurmountable (the following exposé is based on Versnel 2011: ch. 1). To which of the thrice countless gods (*tris murioi*, Hesiod *Op*. 252f. on 'the assistants of Zeus') did ancient man choose to pray for the special request he had in mind? At first sight, divine specialization might present a viable way out. After all, according to Herodotos 2.53, Homer and Hesiod had bestowed upon the gods their appropriate epithets (*tas eponumias*), distributing their honours/powers and crafts (*timas te kai technas*), while also shaping (literally 'signalizing') their appearances (*eidea*). Hence,

Greeks may have been knowledgeable about each god's specialism and have made their choice accordingly. The truth is that things tend to be less simple than we (and the Greeks) might like to believe to think they are.

Surely there are examples of an easy, natural choice for a special god based on her/his specific qualities. The seriously sick would pray for health to a healing god, most specifically Asklepios, either in his famous far away sanctuary at Epidauros or in a local satellite one. The person who wants to make some profit might turn to Hermes—in case of indecent profit, such as theft, to Hermes Psithuros ('to whom you speak in whisper'). A young woman in love might specifically pray to Aphrodite (also Psithyros in this case). Here, the *timai* and *technai* well known from mythology may indeed determine the choice for a specific deity. Yet, this one-to-one functional relationship is the exception rather than the rule, and often does not occur even where one might have expected it. In a perilous situation at sea people did not pray for salvation to the god of the sea Poseidon but rather to the Dioskouroi (or, in later times, to Isis Pelagia). In (local) cultic contexts gods, well known from mythology, but specified by functional or topographical epithets, might be ascribed qualities that differed substantially from the central mythological 'offices' known from myth. Moreover, the Apollo, Hera, or Artemis of one sanctuary, city, or region might boast a radically different identity from those of other places. More generally, any god—as well as any of the innumerable local heroes—might be invoked for any of the needs of the praying person. Small wonder, then, that oracle centres specialized in guiding the client on precisely this question: 'to which of the gods must I pray' (in order to fulfil my wish). But even here, the answers that have come to us were often far from clear. Delphi, for instance, seemed to prefer lists of—in our eyes not very coherent—groups of gods (e.g. Parke–Wormell 1956: nos 102, 282, 283).

How? Once the divine name was satisfactorily determined, and prior to the request proper, the god was invoked and his attention attracted, frequently by calling on him with a double vocative. Very often he is asked 'to hear' (*klue, kluthi, akoue, akouson*) or (less often) 'to come' (*elthe*). Significantly, Zeus—apparently taken as more typically omnipresent than other gods—is never addressed with the request to come. Nor does the use of this term necessarily imply that the god concerned is consciously believed to sojourn on Olympus or at any other distant place.

What? What were ancient Greeks concerned about, what did they wish for in their prayers? The answer is: generally very much the same as the issues with which modern people are concerned. The philosopher/doctor/miracle worker Empedokles boasts that, on his tours around 'flourishing cities', numerous people follow him, 'asking where lies the path to profit (*kerdos*), some seeking prophecies, while others, for many a day stabbed by grievous pains, beg to hear the word that heals all manner of illness' (DK 31 B 157). Wealth and health in an infinite variety of detail are indeed the two prevalent topics of prayer, as they are still today. Unfortunately, the prayers of humble men, being pronounced but rarely written, and, if written, mostly on perishable material, have only rarely come to us. Prayers inscribed on stone are usually of an official nature serving public commemoration just as dedicatory inscriptions (Depew 1997). To find the issues central to the prayers of common people we may take either one of two strategies.

One strategy looks at the questions put to the oracle, for example, the ones that were inscribed on lead tablets that were found in great numbers at the oracle centre of Zeus and Dione at Dodona (Lhôte 2006, whose numeration is adopted here; Eidinow 2007: ch. 5; see also, in this volume, Johnston, Chapter 32). They are not prayers themselves but questions about the most profitable course of action in order to reach one's goal, including the question to which god a prayer must be directed. As such, they betray needs with which ancient man was concerned, and for which he needed divine information or help. Many are of the type: 'will it be better and more profitable (*loion kai ameinon* and variants) if I . . . (buy the plot, will go on a journey, change of profession)'. Another fixed type is the formulaic question: 'To which god or hero must I pray (or sacrifice)' or 'pray *and* sacrifice' (sometimes also 'which god must I appease') in order to . . . Often the final goals are formulated in a general fashion, such as 'in order to fare better' (*loion* again) or 'to achieve what I have in mind' (no. 67). Others, however, detail a wish, as, for instance: 'in order that my illness comes to an end' (no. 46); 'for a male (!) descendant from my wife Philista' (no. 47; cf. no. 50); 'concerning my eyes' (nos 71, 72). How close the wish for knowledge about the future and the wish to know how to act in prayer cohere is illustrated by a discussion in Xenophon *Anab*. 3.1.5f. When Xenophon chose to ask Delphic Apollo 'to whom of the gods he should sacrifice and pray in order to have a prosperous journey

and a safe return', he followed, as we have just seen, a traditional course of action. As did Sokrates (ibid.), who censured him for not having asked the other conventional question, also common at Delphi: 'whether it would be better (*loion*) for him to go or to stay'.

The second, more profitable, strategy looks at thousands of votive inscriptions, in which the god is thanked and rewarded for having answered the prayer: 'Votive reliefs typically represent successful prayers' (Depew 1997: 231). As a rule they open with *euxamenos* (having prayed *and* vowed) or forms of the related word *euche*, followed by the object of the prayer. In these texts too there is no limit to the variety of wishes. A man can pray for the life of a child; for his wife, children and relatives; for the salvation of all his *idioi* ('his own people': members of his family and household); for a good crop; for his donkey; for good fortune, for profit; for the conception of children over the course of time; for his master; for lifestock and dogs; or give thanks for having escaped from a mad dog. Frequent too are prayers/votives for *euploia* (safe (sea) journey) (for references to all these wishes, see Versnel 1981: 8–10).

Nothing revolutionary new, then, and nothing shocking, but, perhaps for that very reason, a welcome antidote against the modish mantra that the Greeks were 'desperately alien', 'desperately or fundamentally foreign' (e.g. N. D. Fustel de Coulanges, P. Veyne, J.-P. Vernant, M. Finley, P. Cartledge, for which see Versnel 2011: 11–13). If they were different—and no doubt in some important respects they were—it is not in the domain of the personal wishes in their prayers. In an aside we should note that, in one respect, there *is* a difference. That is, in the way Greeks formulated their feelings of gratitude (besides the material offering of votive gifts). It has often been observed that, contrary to the prayer of supplication, prayers of gratitude are extremely rare in Greek antiquity. Instead of words of gratitude we find expressions of praise and honorification. In this, as so often, religious expression imitates the customary manners in the secular world (Versnel 1981: 42–62).

From the list just mentioned it appears—and it will not raise much surprise—that prayer has an egocentric character, not only when one prays for one's own well-being, but also when wife, child, dog, or occasionally a friend is involved. Even the prayer for fellow humans outside the private circle of the ego (e.g. master or emperor)—often referred to with the German term fürbitte—rarely lacks a self-centred touch. In sum, prayers

for ‘health and wealth’ are of a natural and innocent type of ‘Gebetsegoismus’ (Weinreich 1968). They are not necessarily offensive towards other persons. Other types, however, may unintentionally or consciously attract more negative aspects. Drought, epidemics, or hail, for instance, can be prayed away (*apopempein*, Schlesier 1990). We find the following, near proverbial, geographic instructions to the gods: send them into the sea or overseas; to the mountains where the cock does not crow and the dog does not bark; as far as the heavens are removed from the earth. *Eis oros e eis kuma* (to the mountain or into the sea) is a fixed expression. In *Oedipus Tyrannus* 190f. the chorus prays that the horrible Ares will be sent ‘far from the fatherland, to the great nuptial room of Amphitrite (= the sea) or to the inhospitable Thracian gulf’. Here, the Thracians are selected on the ground that they were one of the most distant peoples known in early times. But one step further—a step both vicious and profitable—is the formulaic prayer in case of evil circumstances to send these: ‘onto the heads of our enemies’ (*eis echthron kephalas*), which, incidentally, safely landed in the Roman Catholic missal as *averte mala inimicis* (drive away disaster to the enemies). The mechanisms described here are not confined to ancient Greek culture. Nor is the following, final, step in wishing evil to an adversary, which we will introduce with the aid of a brief text inscribed by a woman by the name of Artemis on a lead tablet in a Demeter sanctuary at Knidos in south-west Asia Minor (second century bce?) (*DT* no. 8–9; *IKnidos* I. no. 148). It is one of some dozen tablet texts very similar in both form and purpose:

> Artemis dedicates to Demeter, Kore and all the gods together with Demeter, the person who refuses to return to me the articles of clothing that I left with him, although I asked for them. May he himself bring them back to Demeter, also if someone else now has my possessions, may he, consumed by fire, confess it publicly. But let me not infringe any divine law in this and may I be free (. . .) to drink and eat and consort under the same roof (with the accursed). For I have suffered wrong, Oh Mistress Demeter (*adikemai gar Despoina Damater*).

We started the present section with the earliest Greek prayer known to us; we now conclude it with a prayer from the Hellenistic period. Apart from chronology the two also differ in their cultural setting: the first is taken from a literary work—and the most hallowed example of that genre—the second was scratched on lead and dedicated in a sanctuary; it betrays a humble ambience and concerns a relatively futile affair. The most remarkable (and relevant *and* disquieting) difference, however, is that the

first is commonly cited as a (*the*) paradigmatic form of Greek prayer, whereas about the second (and its cognates) a scholarly discussion is raging concerning the question whether it may be ranged at all among the category ‘prayer’ or should rather be assigned to the class of (magical) curse. Two elements play a role in that discussion, first, the fact that, just as the magical *defixiones* that we shall introduce shortly, the Knidian text was written on lead, and, secondly, that it contains an offensive and even destructive form of wishing formula. That *both* ‘prayers’ are appeals to a god to repair an injury suffered by the praying person, and that the offensive aspects are corollary to this, threatens to be pushed to the background in the discussion. This and related issues will have our attention in our next section, ‘Curse’.

CURSE

A curse is a wish that some form of adversity or misfortune may befall a person or persons. This is the minimum definition that we find in dictionaries or encyclopaedic works. Others may be more inclusive, as, for instance, the following: a curse is a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something (Oxford English Dictionary). One question that will be broached in our discussion is whether the additional elements—especially invocation of supernatural power and punishment (‘Der Fluch ist Reaktion auf Unrecht’, thus Graf 2005a: 247)—indeed belong to the fixed or at least prevalent characteristics of ancient curse formula in general.

Within these broad definitions various types of curses can be distinguished, according to setting, motive, and conditions. By way of introduction let us first have a glance at a variety of maledictory expressions to be found in ancient Greek curses.

Forms

In the section on prayer (‘Forms’; ‘Contexts’) two malevolent prayers have been quoted, one phrased in general, the other in specific, terms. The prayer of the priest Chryses is of the general type: ‘let the Danaans pay for my tears’. The nature of the penalty is not stipulated. Unspecified curse formulas of this type are rife throughout Greek history. An early specimen can be found in the famous list of public imprecations from Teos (the so-called *Dirae Teae c*.470 BCE, *Syll*.3 37–8; ML 1988, no. 30; Herrmann 1981) which the magistrates used to pronounce annually against those who endangered the peace and prosperity of the city. Each of these curses ends with the formula: ‘that the offender and his posterity (*genos*) will perish (*apollusthai*)’. Much later, grave inscriptions of Roman Asia Minor display a variety of formulaic general imprecations against grave desecrators (and their progeny): ‘that the gods may be enraged/wrathful’ (or: ‘not propitious/clement’), or the offender ‘will be impious (*asebes*) to the gods’, or ‘will have to reckon with the god’ (*estai pros ton theon*) (Strubbe 1991, 1997). In this stereotyped form they are ubiquitous, but, of course, may allow for all sorts of juicy specifications. A particularly sophisticated elaboration of this type is the double-edged curse that the culprit may not be able to sacrifice successfully (Versnel 1985). A curse from Mopsuestia in the third century ce (Versnel 1985: 248) combines these general and specific wishes:

> I invoke the gods of heaven and underworld and all Ara and Lussa (personified ‘Curse’ and ‘Rage’) to show their rage at the culprits for the rest of their life. And may it be impossible for them to perform sacred acts/sacrifice (*ta hiera*) in any way . . .

The prayer/curse of the lead tablet from Knidos, also quoted in the prayer section of ‘Contexts, Motives, and Motifs’, presents an illustration of the variety of specific curses: ‘may he (the perpetrator), consumed by fire, confess it publicly’. This stipulation belongs to the fixed formulas of these thirteen to fifteen Knidian lead tablet texts. ‘Consumed by fire’ here means ‘vexed by burning fever’ (Versnel 1995), an affliction to be sent by the invoked goddess (here Demeter) with the explicit goal to redress the crime and make the culprit return the expropriated object—and lose face by his/her public confession (Versnel 1999). Personal emotional involvement (on which see Chaniotis 2009, particularly on the Knidian curses, and 2013) often provokes a detailed description of the torments called down upon the targets. Formulaic ‘apopemptic’ prayers for sending disaster of any kind (epidemic, illness, war, famine) to places far away,

that we discussed in the section on prayer (‘Contexts, Motives, and Motifs’), are corn to the mill for private imprecations. Variants on these wishes prevail in maledictions against personal opponents and enemies who have wronged the authors. A particularly extended, oft-quoted curse/prayer from Amorgos (*IG* XII, 7 1; Versnel 1991, 1999; Gager 1992: no. 75, dated from second century bce to second century ce), related to the Knidian texts and, like them, addressed to Demeter, splendidly illustrates the luxuriant multiplicity of these formulaic maledictions:

> Side A) Lady Demeter, O Queen, as your supplicant, your slave, I fall at your feet (. . . . . .) Lady Demeter, this is what I have been through. Being bereft I seek refuge in you: be merciful to me and grant me my rights. (Follows a detailed accusation against the offender.) Grant that the man who has treated me thus shall have satisfaction neither in rest nor in motion, neither in body nor in soul; that he may not be served by slave or by handmaid, by the great or the small. If he undertakes something, may he be unable to complete it. May his house be stricken by the curse for ever. May no child cry (to him), may he never lay a joyful table; may no dog bark and no cock crow; may he sow but not reap; (. . . . . .); may neither earth nor sea bear him any fruit; may he know no blessed joy; may he come to an evil end together with all that belongs to him.
>
> Side B) Lady Demeter, I supplicate you because I have suffered injustice: hear me, goddess, and pass a just sentence. For those who have cherished such thoughts against us and who have joyfully prepared sorrows for my wife Epiktesis and me, and who hate us prepare the worst and most painful horrors. O Queen, hear us who suffer and punish those who rejoice in our misery.

We are confronted here with a *genuine* prayer for divine assistance (including the elements invocation and punishment of the inclusive definition already mentioned), in which the creative author, by way of helpful suggestion to the goddess, manages to insert a cumulation of *pure* curses, which we find elsewhere as independent expressions lacking any reference to divine intervention.

Predictably, bodily torture of the target is rife in curses against personal opponents. Hardly any body part or mental ability of the target escapes the danger of being cursed, resulting in long series of targeted body parts from ‘top to toe’ in so-called ‘anatomical curses’ (Versnel 1998). A lead tablet from Megara (*DT* 42, first–second century ce) curses ‘breast, lungs, heart, liver, . . . hips, lower back, intestines . . . sex, thighs, arse-hole, . . . shins, heels. . . . toes, fingers . . . and any other part of the entire body there may be. . . .’ Equally predictable are lists of afflictions called down upon the target. An inscription from Chalkis of a disciple of the famous Herodes Atticus (Gager 1992, no. 86, second century ce) curses pre-emptively the one who damages his private property *inter alia* as follows: ‘May God

strike him with trouble and fever and chills and itch and drought and insanity and blindness and mental fits' (for which the Judaizing author has ransacked Deuteronomy 28.22, 28.28).

Contexts and Categories

What motives induced persons to have recourse to a curse? The most common is the wish to *punish* or (by threat with punishment) *prevent* acts of injustice against or infringement of private or communal interests. Thus, a first classification is grounded on the distinction between future and past offences, entailing a distinction between conditional and non-conditional (unqualified) imprecations. A second type of classification concerns the distinction between public and private curses. The survey of curse types just mentioned presented samples of various combinations of these four categories.

Conditional curses (imprecations) are future oriented and are aimed at the unknown persons who dare to trespass certain stipulated sacred or secular laws, prescriptions, treaties. They prevail in the public domain and are pronounced by the community through its representatives (magistrates, priests), as in the *Dirae Teiae* mentioned in the section 'Forms', above. A special subdivision in this category is the conditional self-curse typical of solemn oaths (Graf 2005b; Faraone 2012). They are ubiquitous as sanctions at the end of interstate treaties, as, for instance, in the formula 'evil things befall the perjurer, good things happen to him who keeps his oath'. On the other hand, the majority of later conditional imprecations against violators of graves, as mentioned in the section 'Forms', above, rather belong to the private domain.

Non-conditional curses are concerned with past or present occurrences. Though not lacking in the public domain, the majority of them relate to private concerns. And, with this, we touch on two types of curses whose classificatory interrelationship is subject to current scholarly debate. The one solid and conspicuous feature they have in common is the material form in which they have come to us: lead tablets. And it is precisely this common trait that has become a source of scholarly miscommunication.

Defixio

We have mentioned several times the existence of lead tablets as the bearers of curse texts. In scholarly literature this type of curses is referred to with the Latin term *defixio* (from *defigo*: to 'pin down', although the word *defixio* itself does not occur before the sixth century ce). In ancient Greek they are called *katadesmos* or *katadesis* (from the verb *katadeo* = 'binding down'), and hence are often ranged under the name 'binding curses'.

Defixiones are thin lead sheets inscribed with maledictions intended to influence the actions or welfare of persons (or animals). Many of them do not display an explicit motive but the ones that do, through explicit or implicit allusions, most often appear to have been inspired by feelings of envy and competition. The main playing fields of the *defixio* are: (1) sports (originally athletics, in Roman times focusing on—and found in great numbers in—the amphitheatre and circus); (2) litigation; (3) love/erotics; and (4) commerce (Faraone 1991a; Gager 1992; Ogden 1999). Occasionally motives beyond those of competition have been deduced, for instance in the context of commerce where, sometimes, long lists of persons are being cursed (Eidinow 2007: ch. 10, 2012, which introduces the notion 'risk' as the paramount niche of the *defixio*). Generally, these *defixiones* are anonymous and lack self-justifying arguments or references to any deserved punishment of the cursed person(s). If gods are involved they belong to the sphere of death, underworld, witchcraft (Gaia, Hermes, Persephone, Hekate). In later times, magical names of exotic demons and gods abound. Spirits of the dead may also be addressed as carriers of the *defixio*, which is sometimes called *epistole* (epistle/letter), with the task to deliver it to the powers of the netherworld. Hence, the tablets were often buried in graves of persons who had experienced an untimely death, as well as in chthonic sanctuaries and wells. The tablets (now exceeding a total number of 1600; collected in *DTA*; *DT*; *SGD*; *SGD* II; Eidinow 2007) first appear in the late sixth century bce in Sicilia and Olbia, and somewhat later in Attica, while they reach their acme in Athens in the fourth and third centuries BCE. The earliest specimens are also the simplest, often containing only the names of the cursed people or adding 'I bind' and the god to whom they are 'assigned' (for which the expressions *katagrapho pros* or *engrapho pros*

are used: ‘to register with’). The tablets might be rolled up and transfixed with a nail and sometimes poppets/voodoo dolls were added (Faraone 1991b).

These *defixiones* display a number of, quite idiosyncratic, characteristics. The first is the element of binding. The focus is not on torment or destruction—in particular, not in the texts of the Classical period—but on laming and putting out of action. The often professed objective is that the target will not be able to outdo or injure the author in the daily struggle for survival. Hence, the emphasis is put on selected parts of the body whose functions must be obstructed (= bound): the mind, soul, and voice for the rhetor, the hand and feet for the athlete. Litigative cases before court, in particular, provide a fertile soil for binding formulas and their goals. The earliest *defixiones* (from Sicily) presented formulas in the following terms: ‘I “register” NN and the tongue of NN, so that it will be twisted and devoid of success’, while, eight centuries later, curses from Carthago and elsewhere have: ‘I have bound their tongues so that they cannot speak or act against me.’ All this implies that these *defixiones* were pre-emptive and future oriented. Further features include the idea that gods may play a role as the ones ‘*with whom* the target is bound or registered’, but, at least in the Classical *defixiones*, submissive prayer-like formulas are hard to find. The tablets are secretly placed in graves or wells and there are clear indications that, if not rejected by law, they were at least disapproved of socially.

Altogether, the *defixio* can be, and usually is, ranged among the category that we have baptized ‘curse’. But in Greek perception it was a category on its own. Whereas all other types of curses could be and often were referred to as *arai*, the *defixio* never—neither in its own texts nor in references to it—seems to have been included into this category. In contrast to what the inclusive definition of curse (at the beginning of the section ‘Curse’, above) would suggest, these curses are not ‘punitive’. And even if gods often played a role they were not ‘invoked’ for help, but rather functioned as the authoritative centre where the curse is being delivered for final implementation. This means that the majority of Greek *defixiones* is performative by nature. More generally, all curses that lack requests for divine intervention and solely consist of the wish that evil, specified or not, may befall the target are performative speech acts. By utterances such as ‘I bind’, ‘I curse’, and so on the curse is supposed to

start independently performing its task. Word and act coincide. This is what lends these curses a certain coercive appearance.

This, then, distinguishes this type of curse from the prayer, where invocation and request form the gist of the latter's definition. While in performative/coercive *defixiones* it is man and (his) words (including spells) that control the working of the curse, request formulas in prayer, such as 'I pray/beseech, god, that . . .', 'please god do . . .' explicitly put the fulfilment in the hands of the divine addressee. And, with this, we have arrived at the other type of lead tablet texts.

The Prayer for Justice

We concluded the section on prayer with one of the Knidian prayers, two of whose features—the material on which it was written (lead) and the offensive nature of its request—had given rise to a discussion about its 'true' nature: 'prayer' or '(magical) curse'. Such was also the fate of the related 'curse' from Amorgos, quoted earlier in the section 'Forms'. In past scholarship, both, as well as many others, were simply accommodated under the common denominator '*defixio*'. And yet in different contexts submissive pleas to a god to redress a wrong and revenge an offence are just as self-evidently ranged among the category 'prayer', as we saw in the case of the prayer of priest Chryse in the Iliad.

A few hoards of curse texts of the type of the Knidos texts have been found elsewhere, some recently—such as those in a Demeter sanctuary at Acrocorinth (Stroud 2013) and in the Isis and Magna Mater temple at Mainz (Latin texts: Blänsdorf 2012)—some known for a long time, such as the Latin curses in the hot spring of Dea Sulis at Bath (Tomlin 1988). The Knidos and Corinth ones, as well as some stray finds elsewhere, are written by women, for whom this may have been a welcome—most likely the sole—avenue to get justice. Demeter festivals may have served as an opportune platform for these curse rituals (Faraone 2011). Generally inscribed on lead tablets as well, they differ from the genuine *defixiones* in that they display a choice of the following features (Versnel 1991, 2009b): the author may disclose her name; the tablets are deposited or put up (sometimes publicly) in sanctuaries; the action suggests an indictment intended to open a lawsuit and is justified by a reference to some injustice

committed by the cursed person (theft, slander), hence refers to the past; the gods are supplicated in a submissive way to punish the culprit and redress the injustice; the tone is often markedly emotional and vindictive; and the lists of cursed body parts may extend to long anatomical enumerations exposing the whole body to torture and punishment (Versnel 1998).

'Prayer for justice' is presently widely accepted as the appropriate term for the pure (and oldest known) texts from Knidos and related tablet texts. While the cradle of the *defixio* must be sought in sixth-century Greek-speaking areas, there are strong indications (e.g. a remarkable relationship with the so-called confession texts of Lydia and Phrygia) that the prayers for justice originated in the pre-Greek cultures of Asia Minor. They betray obvious links with Near Eastern conceptions of gods in the role of supreme justice, keeping a watchful eye on human behaviour and punishing the offender (Versnel 2009a: 25–45). In later times, we observe an increasing tendency to amalgamate elements of the prayer for justice and the *defixio*, thus creating a 'borderline' category. It is here that the two main notions of the present entry on prayer and curse have found a common niche.

CONCLUSION

Using our own terminology is unavoidable. So this contribution has 'prayer' and 'curse' in its title. However, what the ancient testimonies have taught us is that here, as in so many other cases, the notions covered by our terms do not always precisely correspond with the notions covered by the Greek words that, in our dictionaries, are rendered by the terms 'prayer' and 'curse'. Nor do the distinctions that we make between prayer and curse always match the way in which ancient Greeks understood distinctions between their 'corresponding' terms. This certainly does nothing to make our study (very much including the task of the translator) easier. But the profit of our exercises may consist of a modest contribution to a growing insight into the questions in what respects, to which degree, under which circumstances, and how distinctively Greeks, and, above all,

which Greeks, conceived their world in ways different from or similar to those of us moderns.

Suggested Reading

For the most informative recent treatments of ancient Greek prayer and curse *ThesCRA* should be consulted. For comprehensive but concise monographs on prayer in English, which are accessible to the general reader, Versnel 1981: 1–64 and Pulleyn 1997 may be considered. On curse, *defixio* in particular, very useful collections of curse tablet texts are presented by Gager 1992 (in English) and Eidinow 2007 (Greek and English). The latter also provides a new discussion of the psycho-sociological embedment of these curses from the perspective of risk. Watson 1991 expounds the role of curses in literature. The 'prayer for justice' was, after some initiatives in the early twentieth century, put on the map again in a comprehensive study by Versnel 1991, which may be consulted for a first orientation.

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CHAPTER 31

SACRIFICE

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'SACRIFICE' derives from the Latin *sacra facere*, which, in turn, resembles the Greek phrase *hiera rezein*. All three mean 'to do sacred things', and so any treatment of Greek sacrifice may begin with the observation that this practice is a composite. Oracles follow sacrifices; prayers and hymns often accompany them, and sometimes oaths do; a healing visitation or a dedication may occur afterwards. Epiphanies rarely occur during sacrifices, but a divine presence of some sort, to answer prayers, listen to music, smell smoke, and manipulate the animal's vitals, is indispensable for the rite.

So much is true of sacrifices involving animal victims, but sacrifices made with vegetal offerings extend the field of this practice. Vegetal offerings occurred every morning and every evening, at home and in shrines, before voyages and other journeys. Libations and incense-burning were far more common than animal sacrifice, if only because they accompanied most animal sacrifices yet also occurred without them. Sacrifices with human victims form a part of Greek thinking about the rite, even if, as will shortly emerge, these sacrifices were mostly imaginary.

The recipients varied, too. As Scott Scullion (1994) implied when defending the contrast between 'Olympian' and 'chthonian', Greek terms

for sacrifice reflect this contrast. *Thysia*, which smoked, went up, to Olympians; *sphagia*, or bloodletting, went down, to chthonians, as did *enagismos*, which often went down to heroes through tubes. Yet heroes received *thysiai*, too, showing that the distinction drawn among recipients was not absolute. Sacrifice was heterogeneous. (On the distinction between Olympians and chthonians see also, in this volume, Deacy, Chapter 24.)

Just as offerings and recipients varied, so did context. Sometimes a meal of meat followed, but very often some sort of divination followed, with or without examination of the liver through hepatoscopy. A festival might follow, or the propitiation of a ghost. Sometimes the community attended, sometimes only the priest or magistrate acting on the community's behalf. Sometimes the family attended, sometimes only an individual worshipper.

In English (and French), all this is 'sacrifice'; in German, most of it is *Opfer*. In Greek, however, *thysia*, *sphagia*, and *enagismos* are only three of a dozen relevant terms. There are two kinds of libations, *spondai*, poured in the name of the Olympians, and often used to solemnize treaties; and *choai*, poured in the name of the chthonian divinities and used for propitiation. *Aparche* designates both preliminary offerings and first fruits. Catalogues of these sundry terms appear in the leading studies on Greek sacrificial vocabulary (Stengel 1910; Eitrem 1915; Rudhardt 1958; Casabona 1966).

For the sacrifice of human victims, there was no Greek term. Tragedy aside, reports of such *thysiai* in the Archaic, Classical, or Hellenistic sources are rare, especially reports of regular rituals. For regular *thysia*, there is only Herodotos 7.197, on a ritual at Alos, and Plato, plus later sources, for the famed ritual at Mount Lycaon (*Resp*. 565c–d, with *Min*. 315c). Empedokles (fr. 137 DK) does not specify regular ritual. Instead, this passage deals with the putative origins of sacrifice in a golden age preceding the slaughter of animals by human beings. Other, later sources report regular but obsolete rituals—Pausanias (7.4.19, 9.8.2), Porphyry (*Abst*. 2.55, with four reports), and Apollodoros (1.9.1). Christian sources like Clement (*Protr*. 3.42) and Lactantius (*Div. inst*. 1.21) are tendentious, and the particulars that they report are unreliable. This unsatisfactory evidence led Pierre Bonnechère (1994), author of the fullest recent

treatment, to conclude ‘human sacrifice’ was not a Greek historical reality (on human sacrifice, see also, in this volume, Osborne, Chapter 1).

If *sphagia*, not *thysia*, is the term for a ‘human sacrifice’, the same difficulties appear. Rather than reports of rituals, there are reports of measures taken during emergencies, such as the slaughter of prisoners by Themistokles, according to Plutarch (*Them.* 22.7; see also Pl. *Resp*. 391b; and later sources such as Paus. 9.33.4). Porphyry reports the only regular ritual, one for Cronus that scarcely differs from a public execution as opposed to a communal sacrifice (*Abs*. 2.54). Once again there are obsolete practices (Phylarchos *FGrH* 81 F 80, an obsolete pre-battle ritual) and mythic reports (such as Serv. *A*. 3.121, 11.264 on Idomeneus’ sacrifice of his child). If, on the other hand, scapegoat rituals with human victims are to be considered acts of *sphagia*, as argued by Renée Girard (1972), there is no philological evidence to be found. Scapegoating is never termed sacrificial. (On scapegoat rituals see, in this volume, Bremmer, Chapter 40.)

What, then, is the significance of ‘sacrifice’ from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods? Recent scholarship that will be cited in ‘Scholarly Treatment of Sacrificial Decorum’, below, regards sacrifice as the central ritual of ancient Greek religion. In this chapter, I shall argue that it is an etic or modern term that has strayed too far from emic or ancient experience. It tends to ignore or contradict Greek perspectives, and to overemphasize two aspects—killing and eating—while underemphasizing other aspects of the rite. Instead of adding to what ancient sources report, it obscures what they say. The terms ‘offering’ and *Opfer* are both preferable to ‘sacrifice’.

The remainder of this chapter seeks to support this conclusion though a critical review of scholarship, especially the work of Walter Burkert (1983 [1972], 1985 [1977], 2001 [1990]) and the Paris School of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne (1989 [1979]), followed by two relevant examples of the rite. As I have argued elsewhere (but not argued strongly enough), acts of sacrifice are aesthetic as well as social events. The worshippers performed these acts for a god whose function, partly, was not only to accept the performance, but also to judge and to enjoy it. The god framed or completed the act. In this sense, the god of sacrifice was a kind of reality—an epiphenomenon—and not an illusion.

A Review of Scholarship

Confronted with the multifariousness of sacrifice, the leading scholars of this rite, Burkert and the French team of Vernant and Detienne, have emphasized some aspects of sacrifice at the cost of others. Even before *Homo Necans* (translated in 1983), Burkert emphasized the slaughter of the animal. This emphasis was not accidental. Burkert was a follower of Konrad Lorenz, the sociobiologist who compared human aggression to aggression among other species in his *On Aggression* (1966 [1963]). The slaughter of an animal in an act of sacrifice is the most striking expression of aggressive impulses in Greek religion, save only for the legendary sacrifice of human beings, and so Burkert devoted more attention to this step than to others—more, for example, than he devoted to the prayers made during acts of sacrifice. By the same token, the slaughter of the animal makes sacrifice the paradigmatic ritual. As Burkert (2001 [1990]: 12) wrote, 'Society is built on impulses of aggression controlled by ritual, as Konrad Lorenz has shown.'

A second element in Burkert's view of sacrifice was the emphasis on psychology. Burkert's accounts of sacrifice centre on what he called (in Burkert 2001 [1990]: 11), 'The joy of the festival, the horror of death', in a word, on worshippers' emotions. Since animal sacrifice, with its slaughter of a living creature, seems mostly likely to elicit emotions, Burkert had reason to concentrate on this act as opposed to sacrifice in general. But the primacy of psychology meant more than another reason to focus on the slaughter of animals. It meant that scholars should look for emotions that the Greeks felt but did not acknowledge. Since the Greeks, like all human beings, were unconsciously aggressive, one of these unacknowledged emotions was guilt arising from acts of violence such as animal sacrifice. The collective aspect of this guilt derived not so much from Lorenz, however, as from a tradition of scholarship that was largely French, and dated back to Émile Durkheim, the French sociologist active around 1900. In this tradition, religious rites provided solidarity: in agricultural societies, solidarity founded on kinship, and, in industrial societies, solidarity founded on the workplace. Burkert linked solidarity to guilt.

A third element in Burkert's view, more prominent in *Homo Necans* (1983 [1972]) than in his other works on sacrifice, was the origin of this collective guilt in prehistory, or even in the development of primates prior to the emergence of *homo sapiens*. In tracing guilt at animal slaughter to prehistory, Burkert followed his teacher Karl Meuli, who posited that Stone Age hunters in Siberia felt guilt at killing their prey (for references and background, see the 2012 essay of Burkert's pupil, Fritz Graf). This was tracing the origins of Greek sacrifice broadly, but Lorenz led Burkert to trace these origins more broadly still, to the behaviour of herds or packs. The influences of both Meuli and Lorenz led Burkert away from comparisons between the Greeks and their neighbours. Greek sacrifice was not to be understood as a regional, historical phenomenon.

The views of Vernant and Detienne, among others, developed in opposition to Burkert's, but, like him, they concentrated on a single step. For them, this step was the distribution and consumption of the meat. In the words of a 1981 paper of Vernant's, sacrifice was 'an operation that jointly offers an animal's life to the gods and transforms its body into food for human consumption' (English trans. Vernant 1991: 295). Burkert, Vernant said, erred in emphasizing the slaughter of victims. The slaughter received little attention in the Greek sources, whereas feasting received more. In Vernant's view, it deserved more. Feasting, not slaughter, was the last step in an act of sacrifice, and it was also the step in which the most persons participated. It was, further, the most differentiated step, for not all participants received the same portions and, on many occasions, the participants were limited in number or other ways. Feasting united yet divided, establishing both community and hierarchy. For Burkert's antisocial impulses Vernant substituted social impulses. Solidarity, not guilt, was central to sacrifice.

Solidarity, however, was not altogether positive. Vernant found the negative side of solidarity in Hesiod's story of Prometheus' sacrifice to Zeus. Unlike Burkert's hunters or primates, Vernant's Prometheus is isolated, and is punished. As related in Vernant (1991: ch. 16), isolation and punishment are both features of a struggle for power between Prometheus and Zeus—of a politics of sacrifice that caused the act of distribution and consumption to be (and to remain) contested. The interplay of solidarity and rivalry drew on Durkheim, as Burkert had done, but to different effect.

This version of sacrifice situated the ritual in Greek political history, and severed the link Burkert had made between sacrifice and the Stone Age. In spite of this change, Vernant resembled Burkert in avoiding comparisons between Greek practice and sacrifice in neighbouring societies. Most notably, Vernant ignored the Near Eastern sacrificial system we know most about—that of ancient Israel. As for Mesopotamian sacrifice, in this area, unlike that of the Western Semites, sacrifice is not an apt term to describe food offerings to the gods, and so Vernant rejected this comparison, too (in Vernant 1991). At the same time, Vernant and Burkert said little about Roman sacrifice. The bloodless Imperial cult was perhaps unattractive to Burkert, and Rome's polyglot cities were very different from the Greek poleis that interested the two French writers.

The emphasis on killing, on the one hand, and on eating, on the other, leads to difficulties explored in Faraone and Naiden 2012, a volume of essays, including the aforementioned essay of Graf's, and also by myself, when I returned to the subject in a monograph of the same year (Naiden 2012). One difficulty is that the stress of communal meat-eating overestimates the availability of sacrificial meat in the great cities of the Classical and Hellenistic periods, even as this same stress neglects the role of markets and messes in providing non-sacrificial meat. A second is that Greek offerings resembled those of neighbouring societies, casting doubt on explanations that refer to idiosyncratic features of Greek society. For traits of sacrifice such as the combination of libations, vegetal offerings, and animal slaughter, found from Phoenicia to Rome, by way of Greece and Carthage, there ought to be explanations of a Mediterranean, rather than Greek, character.

A third objection, better suited to the confines of this chapter, is that stress on killing and feasting, and thus on violence and solidarity, overlooked the standard of decorum required in an act of sacrifice. This standard is what makes an act of sacrifice an aesthetic as well as social act—a performance as well as a ritual. The viewer (and judge) of this performance was the god, and the performers doubled as spectators. As Burkert showed in his treatment of sacrifice in *Greek Religion* (1985 [1977]), this ritual was often a great occasion, and so the performers had to be at their best in every sense of the word.

The leading recent scholars, like those of previous generations, have not ignored this standard of decorum. The polluted should not participate in

sacrifices, they report, and neither should persons who had done violence against the gods. In these respects, decorum was negative. Geek usage supplies a positive counterpart: sacrifices must be *kala*, meaning both ‘handsome’ and ‘socially and morally acceptable’, or, to use a single English word, ‘fair’ in two senses. First, the animal or other offering must be *kalon*. Second, the worshipper must be *kalos*. Third, the other circumstances must be *kala*. Fourth, the entrails must prove to be *kala*. In the common phrase, *hiera kala*, the word *hiera* referred not only to victims, but also to the chief features of the act.

Most of these requirements are unsurprising. Yet even the well-known requirements, such as an animal that is *kalon*, may be underestimated. The Greeks went well beyond the common epigraphical dictates that the animal be of some particular age, gender, or colour, or that it be ‘finished’, *teleion*. For communal sacrifices, the *demos* assigned officials to inspect animals and see that these offerings were satisfactory. In order to select the best animals, officials sometimes conducted ‘beauty contests’. As for the requirement that the worshipper be *kalos*, it extended not only to those leading or authorizing the sacrifice, but also to all those present. Once again, the *demos* put its officials to work, along with vigilant citizens. In Athens, concerned citizens could drag from a shrine any woman thought to be an adulteress (Dem. 59.85–6). That would spare the god her noxious presence.

The *demos* regulated most aspects of sacrifice. Officials maintained order during processions by means of clubs and whips as well as by fines, and later some of them performed the very different task of giving prizes to the best composer of a song or verse honouring the god receiving the sacrifice. Officials performing sacrifices were subject to *euthynai*, or audit (Aeschin. 3.18), priests performing them were subject to contracts, and *theoroi* attending them were obliged to make public reports when they returned to their home cities (*IMagn*. 44.35–6). There was a right way to attend, as there was to perform.

The most important aesthetic aspect of sacrifice was often the inspection of the entrails of the victim. This was true of acts of *thysia* followed by a meal, and of some acts of *sphagia*, as well as of acts of divination followed by hepatoscopy. The common term, *kallierein*, referred to both the first and last of these three categories of sacrifice. Either way, *kallierein* designated a sacrifice that the god accepted, and that

therefore succeeded. The Greeks, though, tended to think not of ‘success’ but of a divine judgement that the sacrifices were *kala*, or ‘fair’ (again in two senses). Gods were not usually persuaded. They were pleased, and indicated as much.

CLASSICAL EXAMPLES OF SACRIFICIAL DECORUM

Because of recent interest in polis religion, the first of the following two examples of sacrificial decorum is an Athenian *lex sacra* of the Classical period. The second example, or body of evidence, consists of general statements about sacrificial decorum outside of Athens, especially in Sparta. These examples show worshippers observing decorum in two ways, first, by meeting a standard of beauty, *to kallos*, and second, by meeting a standard of propriety.

The first example, an inscription from the 330s concerning the Little Panathenaia, presents an act of civic sacrifice from the perspective of *kallos*. This quality proves to be a civic burden as well as an artistic achievement, for *kallos* involves the mobilization of ample civic resources —officials, money, and participants. After the usual preliminaries, comes the first mention of *kallos*, at line 5: ‘Let the sacrifice for Athena at the Little Panathenaia be as handsome as possible (*hos kallista*). For this reason, let the revenue available to the *hieropoioi* be as great as possible’ (*Agora* 16.75.5–7).

Hos kallista is costly. How shall the people of Athens afford it? Income from ‘new land’: ‘Let [unnamed officials] rent the new land ten days before . . . in two lots to the man paying the most . . . or the man who would’ (*Agora* 16.75.7–10). The ‘new land’ is Oropos, to which Athens has a doubtful title. The income will come from renting it to Athenians, who will treat the previous inhabitants as tenants or will expel them. These rents will pay for the victims. As later lines in the inscription explain: ‘Using the 41 *mnai* from renting the new land, . . . let the *hieropoioi* . . . buy cattle. After dispatching the procession to the goddess, let them

sacrifice all these cattle on the altar of Athena' (*Agora* 16.75.41–2). Besides requiring revenue, beauty requires an aggressive foreign policy.

The next section deals with sacrifices and other offerings. It begins by stating the purpose of the transfer: 'so that . . . the parade may be organized as well as possible . . . [every] year on behalf of the people of Athens and so that the *hieropoioi* may in time to come manage everything else for the goddess's festival handsomely' (*Agora* 16.75.28–32). The superlatives may give the impression that the purpose of the resolution is to make new sacrifices. No: the sacrifices will be two in number, the same as before. The chief part of this section begins: 'Let the *hieropoioi* make the two sacrifices, one to Athena Hygiaeia and the other in the old temple, the same as before' (*Agora* 16.75.32–5).

Change comes in the distribution of meat, with officials and priestly assistants receiving larger portions, and in an increase in the number of cattle. Forty-one *mnai*, or about two-thirds of a talent, will have bought dozens (although not 100) animals. Besides meaning 'more' victims, *hos kallista* also means 'the best' victims: 'After selecting one of the most handsome animals, let them sacrifice it at the altar of Nike' (*Agora* 16.75.45–6). After the sacrifice of the rest of the cattle, the *hieropoioi* are to make more distributions that close the section of the decree dealing with *thysia*.

Hos kallista now reworks another part of the sacrifice, the public gathering, including: 'the costs of the procession, the cooking, and the adornment of the great altar, and everything that is fitting. . . . The *hieropoioi* who manage the Panathenaia are to make the gathering for the goddess as handsome as possible' (*Agora* 16.75.52–8). Marching orders follow: 'Let them send off the procession at sunrise and impose lawful punishments on any persons who disobey' (*Agora* 16.75.58–60). Although this inscription does not say so, the polis may have regulated the order of the procession, as on other occasions, such as the Thargelia (*LSS* 14.35–40). *Hos kallista* means choreography, not just war and cattle.

Besides being costly, this standard of performance must have been exhausting, and so it applied only to the greatest sacrifices—besides the Panathenaia, to the Attic Dionysia (*IG* II^2 713.9–10, 1186.10) and the mysteries at Eleusis (*IG* II^2 709), and to a penteric festival at the shrine of Amphiaraos at Oropos (Petrakos (1997) no. 297.12–13). Perhaps the casual use of the expression at Demosthenes 24.28 implies that a few other

festivals met the same standard. In this passage the orator refers to the management of unspecified aspects of the Panathenaia.

Vernant and Detienne do acknowledge the effort involved in sacrifices such as this—an effort that, for them, expresses and heightens civic solidarity. They do not attempt to explain (and they do not emphasize) the ambitiousness of rites on this scale. One reason for this degree of ambition is theological. A goddess who is a greater version of a human being will want a greater measure of the beauty and splendour that humans value. Another reason is economic. Offerings on this scale reflect communal prosperity. As with the Oropos lands, this prosperity results partly from aggression; aside from being civic, it is imperialist.

Seeing only civic solidarity in such a case would imply that all poleis would mount such sacrifices. Yet few did. In the Hellenistic period, the standard of sacrifices *hos kallista* spread, but not widely. It appeared in two important mainland centres, Eretria (RO, 73.2–3) and Delphi (*CID* 4.71.4; *IDelph*. 3.3.238.3). It also appeared in several places in the Aegean, Amorgos (*IG* XII, 7 241.6–7), Kos (*Iscr.Cos* 25.b.8), and Keos (*IG* XII, 5 595), and in two places in Asia Minor: Magnesia (*LSAM* 32.12, 34, 42) and Antiocheia in Cilicia (*LSAM* 81.6–9, *c*.160 BCE, the latest of these examples).

Our second case study comes mainly from Sparta, which kept sacrifice cheap. Lykourgos, Plutarch reported, did not want sacrifices to be costly, for then they would be few. In this spirit, Spartans sacrificed only a cock after a victory (Plut. *Lyc*. 19.8; Plut. *Ages*. 33.6). Sparta's foe, Epaminondas, opposed the new standard, too, when he contrasted *thuein*, moderate eating, with *hybrizein*, immoderate eating (Plut. *Apophth. Lac*. 192d, with *Non pos. suav*. 1099c). Delphi settled the matter, or so Theopompos said:

> According to the oracle, the best sacrifices given to Apollo came from a farmer in Arkadia, one Klearchos, who honoured [his household gods] with incense, and with barley cakes and other sacrificial cakes. He made civic sacrifices every year and never missed a festival. On these occasions he never served the gods by sacrificing cattle or bludgeoning victims, but by burning whatever he could find. (*FGrH* 115 F 344)

Porphyry, the source for this passage in Theopompos, quotes it in order to disparage animal offerings. Yet Klearchos is no vegetarian. He is an example of the Spartan virtue of frequency and of Epaminondas's motto of moderation—and an example of another kind of decorum. The watchword

has ceased to be beauty, and become propriety. This watchword appealed to sources as varied as Plutarch, a priest in the provincial town of Chaeronea in the first century CE, and Theopompos, a rhetorician of four centuries earlier.

The difference between sacrifice *hos kallista* and traditional sacrifice, or sacrifice *kata ta patria*, appears as much in the sources for these two versions of the practice as it does in the ceremonial details. Sacrifice *hos kallista* was a matter of public record inscribed on stone. In more than one sense, this kind of sacrifice was monumental. Sacrifice *kata ta patria*, or 'according to tradition', was a matter of oral transmission sometimes preserved by moralizing or archaizing writers. Both types of source were ideologically charged, but to different effects. Sacrifice *hos kallista* justified the polis. Sacrifice *kata ta patria* illustrated the merits of a way of life. The former was notably Athenian; the latter was notably Spartan or Peloponnesian.

SCHOLARLY TREATMENT OF SACRIFICIAL DECORUM

For Burkert, Vernant, and Detienne, beauty and propriety are not noteworthy qualities in an act of sacrifice, so these writers seldom mention them. Burkert skips the impression that beauty makes in favour of the impression that killing makes. Vernant has no use for beauty for another reason: it does not feed worshippers. For all these writers, propriety is important only at the moments they stress, killing and eating. At the time of killing, the animal must consent; at the time of eating, the citizens must share.

A further difficulty is that these three scholars regard 'sacrifice' as a ritual, that is, a form of behaviour repeated according to rule. Using a less rigid definition, found in Catherine Bell (1997), they might regard it as a ritualization, or behaviour determined partly by rule and partly by other factors. The purposes of the ritual or ritualization range from generating meaning to generating solidarity or social limits. Yet events that should be

‘as beautiful as possible’, and thus resemble works of art, cannot generate meaning, solidarity, or limits without a viewer or listener. The viewer may be supposed to be the god, or other worshippers, or, to combine these alternatives, a god as worshippers conceive him, but whoever the viewer may be, the act of sacrifice cannot be merely a form of behaviour, any more than a performance of the last act of *Hamlet* can be merely an exhibition of duelling.

On the other hand, an event that should be as convenient as possible, and thus as frequent as possible, sends a reiterated message to the recipient of the sacrificial offering. This recipient is less viewer, and more listener, less an aesthetic respondent than a judge or a patron entertaining a request, appeal, or thanksgiving. In this case, ‘sacrifice’ is partly a form of behaviour, but partly a renegotiation of the relation between worshipper and god. This relation may be lifelong, and so some of the vehicles for understanding it are long narratives about worshippers—autobiographies, biographies, histories, novels, and epic poems. Most writers on sacrifice have made little use of these sources. Long descriptions of sacrifice are noted, notably sacrifices in *Iliad* 1 and *Odyssey* 3, but not the narratives in which these sacrifices occur. Yet only the narratives can show the renegotiation process—the reasons for it, the interchange of divine and human, and the consequences. The sacrifice at the end of *Iliad* 1, where Apollo welcomes the offering and lifts the plague affecting the Achaeans, is part of a chain of events, including Chryses’ prayer that Apollo send the plague, and Chryses’ previous sacrifices, which he mentioned when asking the god to avenge him.

The neglect of such narratives is no new oversight in scholarship on sacrifice. The standard works of Paul Stengel (1910), Samson Eitrem (1915), Jean Casabona (1966), and Burkert (1983 [1972], 2001 [1990]) make little use of narratives, and neither do the surveys of Simon Price (1999: ch. 2) and Robert Parker (2005 and 2011: ch. 5). Vernant and Detienne (1989 [1979]) differ, only because of chapter 1 in their book, centred on Hesiod. The most important sacrifice for Burkert is the aetiological Bouphonia, for which no extended account survives, and about which scholars disagree. Naiden s.v. *Bouphonia* in the *EAH* (Naiden 2013a) takes a narrow view in which this ritual is exceptional, whereas Albert Henrichs, s.v. *idem*, *OCD*[4], follows Burkert in taking a broad view in which the Bouphonia is exemplary.

The neglect of extended literary sources has not prevented an altogether different fault in contemporary writing, which is putting all written sources on a par. An illustration of this fault appears in the list of sources cited by Burkert in support of his view that sacrificial animals assented to being sacrificed. This evidence appears in two footnotes to his first article on the subject (1966: 107 nn. 43, 45). The sources listed there are as follows:

> Ael. *NA* 10.50, 11.4, Apollonios *Mir*. 13, Arist. *Mir*. 844a, Plut. *Pel.* 21, Plut. *Luc*. 24.6–7, Porph. *Abst.* 1.25, Philostr. *Her*. 294, 329, Plin. *NH* 32.17,

all given in this order in n. 43. More follow in n. 45:

> Porph. *Abst.* 2.9, schol. Ar. *Pax* 960, Schol. AR 1.425, Plut. *De def. or*. 435b–c and 37a, Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 729f, *SIG* 1025.20.

Of these fourteen sources, only Aristophanes and an inscription from Kos, given in *SIG*, date from BCE. Some of the fourteen sources report *mirabilia*, whereas Plutarch reports a practice at one of the great shrines in Greece. Aristophanes gives the only detailed evidence from the Classical period, but he describes a farcical scene. The Kos inscription, likewise important, since it describes an annual occasion, is irrelevant save for a few words that describe the behaviour of a single animal.

Footnotes of this character are no monopoly of Burkert's, of course. They deserve notice because they reflect a tendency throughout the study of Greek religion, which is to draw sociological conclusions at the expense of cultural distinctions. Sacrifice touches on law, morality, poetry, and visual art, but writing about sacrifice avoids these subjects, especially the first two. The latter two appear more often, but as evidence for ideology, rather than behaviour.

Thoroughness is the obvious justification for such an agglomeration of sources. Yet, if scholarly investigation is to be thorough, visual sources bulk larger than literary ones, the most important compilation being Folkert van Straten (1995). For the study of sacrifice, concentration on visual sources has an obvious advantage: thanks to the training of art historians, aesthetic factors are less likely to be minimized in favour of anthropological or sociological ones.

The chief weakness in scholarship on Greek sacrifice has not, however, been any mishandling or neglect of ancient sources, or even any neglect of the standard of decorum demanded of worshippers. It has been neglecting

to ask why the gods impose this standard, and, above all, why they enforce this standard by occasionally rejecting sacrifices, as happens to Odysseus, his crew, and the Phaiakians, not to mention many later worshippers (*Od*. 9.551–5, 12.356–65, 13.184–7). Scholarship on sacrifice lacks any theology—any explanation of why gods act as they do. This lack of theology does not reflect any lack of interest in the gods in general. The problem of divine misbehaviour, raised by Plato, has interested commentators and scholars down through Burkert, who, in *Greek Religion* (1985 [1977]: table of contents), described the Greek gods as caught 'between amorality and law'. The conduct of gods in the course of sacrifice is the neglected question.

Why should Zeus accept some sacrifices by Odysseus, and not others? Why (to believe Thucydides), should the gods be more particular about Spartan border sacrifices than those of other Greeks? The answer is sometimes divine concern for unwritten laws, sometimes divine adherence to the dictates of *moira*, sometimes divine endorsement of human laws, sometimes divine insistence on artistic or physical standards. The legal and quasi-legal standards involve propriety, and the physical standards involve aesthetics. All these standards count. The theology of sacrifice is not simply a moral or dogmatic one. It sometimes involves the interpretive difficulties characteristic of works of literary or artistic genius. The theology of sacrifice in Euripides is as demanding as the theology of sacrifice in Milton, and with good pagan reason: there are more gods to please or displease.

GREEK SACRIFICE VS. CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE

This comparison between poets is not meant to be a way to smuggle Christianity into the study of Greek religion. The influence of Christianity on the study of Greek religion has often been deleterious. Burkert, Vernant, and Detienne emphasize bloodshed and solidarity in a somewhat

Christian sense, and they share the Christian assumption that sacrifice is a universal practice.

The emphasis on bloodshed—and on guilt—echoes the sacrifice of Jesus, in which an offering is likened to a lamb that washes away sins. Jesus' sacrifice is infallible, voluntary, and unique, three more parallels between Christianity and Burkert's view of sacrificial ritual. In Christianity, the sacrifice is infallible because it is ordained, voluntary because Christ chooses the cross, and unique thanks to Christ's divinity. In Burkert, the sacrifice of an animal is infallible in its positive social effect, voluntary on the animal's part, and unique in its power to unify and pacify the community.

The French emphasis on solidarity suits the Christian Mass, at which the consumption of a sacrificial offering brings worshippers in communion with God and with each other. As in Christianity, participation in Greek meals is communal, and the atmosphere is joyful. *Communitas* arises without the guilt found in Burkert's view.

If sacrifice expresses guilt, as with Burkert, or solidarity, as with the French scholars, it expresses universal human attitudes or needs, and so it ought to exist everywhere. Burkert accepts this conclusion, and so he sets forth a view of Greek sacrifice in which what is Greek is less important than what is primeval. Vernant and Detienne accept it, too, but with the proviso that solidarity, unlike guilt, is a politically conditioned emotion, and so they set forth a view in which the Greek polis, especially democratic Athens, established a distinctive form of the rite. The Christianity in these views is patent: in Burkert, the sacrifice of Christ atones for the guilt felt by all, and in the French writers, the congregation feels solidarity with all its members. Burkert latches onto sin, the French onto salvation.

The resemblance between these scholars' views and the familiar, Christian understanding of sacrifice is tantalizing: did Christian ritual influence Burkert and his contemporaries, or did proto-Christian features of Greek sacrifice influence Christianity first, and scholarship afterwards? There surely are some proto-Christian features—the altar, the combination of foods and liquids, the hymns and processions. Even so, the Greek victim was not voluntary, the expiation of sin was not the chief purpose of the rite, and no salvation was conferred. Greek sacrifice should not be likened to the Eucharist.

Continued use of the term ‘sacrifice’ makes it easy to persist in this mistake, and so this chapter concludes by recommending that scholars working on Greek offerings, especially animal offerings, use ‘offering’ or *offrande*, or the German term, *Opfer*. If these terms fail to evoke bloodshed, this failure is a gain rather than a loss. The modern value set on animal life derives from several sources, including Christianity, but it does not derive from the ancient Greeks. The practices of Greek vegetarians were marginal; the ethos of today’s vegetarians is becoming central.

Suggested Reading

Although theoretical disputes have dominated the study of sacrifice, the recent development of osteological research in Greek shrines promises a new approach that will settle questions about the role of animals and other offerings. Most important is the synthetic work of Gunnel Ekroth (2007, 2008). Among the studies that Ekroth and others have used, the most important is Bookidis, Hansen, Snyder, and Goldberg 1999. This article shows that both sacrificial and other meat might well be eaten on the same occasions in a sacred place, confirming scenes in Aristophanes (*Pax* 1191–7; *Ach*. 998–1007; *Ecc*. 1168–78). Still untackled is comparison of these results with those from the Near East. For links between scholarship on Greek religion and Near Eastern studies, see Naiden 2013b.

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CHAPTER 32

ORACLES AND DIVINATION

SARAH ILES JOHNSTON

INTRODUCTION: HUMAN NEEDS, DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

EARLY on in *Prometheus Bound*—a play that centres on the question of who knows which secrets, whether that knowledge will be shared with others, and at what price—the title character makes a claim to have taught humans all the skills that enable them to thrive. These skills fall into two groups, the first including the practical arts of carpentry, animal husbandry, seafaring, and medicine, for example. But the second group, which Prometheus describes at far greater length, consists of skills that give humans a very significant advantage indeed:

> I devised the many methods of divination (*mantikes*), and I first judged what truth there is in dreams, and I first made known to mortals the meaning of chance utterances, hard to interpret, and of the omens one encounters while on the road; and I defined the flight of crooked-clawed birds—I explained which of them were auspicious or inauspicious by nature, and what their ways of life were and their dislikes and likes of one another and their alliances; and I also taught mortals about the smoothness of entrails and what colour the gall ought to have in order to please the gods, and all about the dappled beauty of the lobe of the liver. It was I who burned thigh-bones wrapped in fat and the long shank bone, thus

> leading mortals down the path of this darkly-signifying art, and it was I who opened their eyes to signs that are fiery and yet dim to understanding. ((Aesch.) *PV* 484–99, my translation)

Useful though that first group of skills might be, they required some form of the physical labour that defined the human condition: wielding a hammer, driving cattle, compounding herbal remedies. The second group, however—'the many methods of divination'—began to erase the difference between humans and the gods altogether (a difference that Prometheus further erased during the famous division of sacrificial meat that finally compelled Zeus to exile him to the lonely mountain crag where the play unfolds). For the gods of Greece, even if not strictly omniscient (in fact, in this play it is Zeus himself who pressures Prometheus to divulge information that only he possesses), knew many things that humans did not—things that could ease the burdens of mortality far more significantly than a hammer or an ox-goad could, and that might preclude the need for herbal remedies, at least temporarily. Indeed, although strictly speaking the 'divine' that is encapsulated in the word divination points only to *interaction* with the gods, there is, implicit to this interaction, a certain levelling of the playing field, sometimes even a promise of encountering a divinity as closely as a mortal ever could. This promise of a divine encounter was part of what made divination such a hot topic of discussion among ancient intellectuals: how *could* something divine interact with something mortal? Why would it bother to do so? And how could we, with our puny mortal capacities, best take advantage of it (Johnston 2008: 4–17)? Prometheus' panoply of divinatory arts responded to the last of these questions but left open the first two, appropriately enough in a play that goes on to suggest that all interactions between human and divine are liable to bring heartache as well as benefit in their wake.

TECHNICAL AND NATURAL METHODS

But let us return to the passage itself. Logically enough, given his claim, the methods that Prometheus mentions are all methods that can be *taught*

—watching the birds and understanding what their behaviour means; examining the entrails of a sacrificed animal and understanding what *they* mean; interpreting the omens that might be conveyed through the dim shapes of a dream or the words of someone else's otherwise idle speech, or the flicker of flames. There is a long habit, stretching back to antiquity and still in use today among scholars of not only the Classical world but also other cultures, of dividing methods of divination into two types. Thus, the first type is often called 'technical'—that is, it comprises techniques that the student could apply whenever extra knowledge was needed. Although some people were understood to be born with a greater capacity to learn these techniques, they could arguably be acquired by anyone with sufficient patience (and fees) to sit at the feet of a skilled teacher, just as one might learn to be a carpenter, a sailor, or a doctor. The second type of method is often called 'natural'—implying that those who practise these methods do so without having been taught (Cic. *Div*. 1.11–12, 1.34, 1.72, etc.; Bouché-Leclercq 1879–1882; Manetti 1993 [1987]; Burkert 2005; Johnston 2008: 9, 28). Later in *Prometheus Bound*, the author of our play alludes to some of the most important natural methods when he has another character mention Apollo's oracle at Delphi and Zeus' oracle at Dodona—places where the gods found ways to speak to mortals more directly, through the voices of specially chosen women whom the gods temporarily 'possessed' (the Delphic Pythia operated like this and perhaps the Dove priestesses of Dodona did as well), or perhaps through the rustling of leaves on a sacred tree, the ringing of sacred bronze cauldrons, or the gurgling of a sacred stream ((Aesch.) *PV* 829–34; on Dodona, see Lhôte 2006; Eidinow 2007).

Already here, however, the tenuousness of the division between 'technical' and 'natural' divination begins to show; someone associated with such an oracle—a priest, a prophet, or another member of the personnel—usually had to interpret what the words or the rustling or the ringing or the gurgling *meant* before those sounds could be used by the enquirers. In the course of putting such 'natural' messages to work in a way that would benefit humans, then, someone with skills that were usually learned from another person had to step in. Moreover, some of the great oracles that privileged natural methods of divination were said to have been founded by mythic figures who practised what are usually considered technical methods. Kalchas, for example, who showed his

expertise in technical methods by interpreting the ‘omen at the wayside’ that led to Agamemnon’s sacrifice of his daughter, was said to have established an oracle at Daunia that specialized in incubation—a method of divination usually considered to be natural, whereby one slept in a god or hero’s sacred precinct and waited to be visited in by him or her while dreaming (Aesch. *Ag*. 104–30; Strabo 6.3.9).

Moreover, some oracles that were famous as sites where the gods spoke to mortals through possessed individuals, the rustling of leaves, or similar natural methods, offered methods of divination that, while not strictly ‘technical’ in the sense of relying directly on a human’s learned knowledge, certainly precluded the direct contact between human and divine that was the hallmark of the most highly valued natural methods. We know that Dodona regularly offered divination by lot, for example. That is: the enquirer submitted a question to the oracle on a small slip of lead that had been folded in such a way as to hide the words. A lot (one of a number of differently coloured pebbles, lumps of clay, or other small objects) was drawn randomly from a jar. Some feature of the lot, when interpreted according to a pre-agreed system (perhaps colour, for example, with white meaning yes and black meaning no) indicated the god’s answer (Cic. *Div*. 1.34.76 = Callisthenes *FGrH* 1224 F22a–b; Johnston 2008: 68–71). It is possible that such a system operated at Delphi as well—certainly, a story conveyed by an inscription from Hellenistic Athens makes it clear that Delphi was open to such operations in principle. Having reached an impasse as to whether they should lease out a sacred meadow for pasturage, the Athenians decided to settle the matter by inscribing ‘yes’ and ‘no’ on each of two identical tin tablets, which were then rolled up and wrapped in identical clumps of wool. The clumps were shaken up together in a bronze jar, and then an official pulled them out again, sealing one into a silver urn and the other into a gold urn. Any Athenian who wished could add his own, personal seals to the tops of the urns, and then the urns were stored away. A delegation travelled to Delphi to ask Apollo whether Athens should answer its question with the word inscribed on the tablet in the silver urn, or that on the tablet in the gold urn. Returning home, they opened the urn that the god had stipulated (we never do learn which one it was) and acted accordingly (*IG* II^2 204).

We know of other occasions on which Delphi may have decided questions in a similar manner. It is possible that Kleisthenes’ naming of

the ten new Attic tribes in the late sixth century BCE—which was done by submitting a hundred possible names to the Pythia and asking her to choose from among them—was handled by lots, for example (Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 21). One might choose to understand the Pythia as being guided by Apollo as she made her choices, but she would not have needed to be in an altered state of consciousness—that is, 'possessed' by Apollo—to carry out such a task. In sum, although the division between technical and natural means of divination is heuristically useful, and although the institutional oracles may have accorded the natural methods greater glamour and authority than the technical, the division was by no means absolute, at least in practice. There never was, and probably never will be, an easy way to dichotomize where this topic is concerned.

For that matter, we also know that some independent diviners claimed to be able to channel Apollo's voice just as the Pythia did, without any need to be located at Delphi or another special spot. They called themselves *pythones*, which implied a close relationship to the Pythia, although other people also call them *engastrimythoi*, or belly-talkers—a term reflecting the belief that some other force was speaking from within their human frame without necessarily implying that this force was Apollo himself—or, indeed, even a god (Pl. *Soph*. 252c; Ar. *Vesp*. 1019–20 and the scholia to both; Plut. *De def. or*. 414e; Katz and Volk 2000). And we know of several occasions on which Delphi or Dodona recommended that delegates from an enquiring city go home and tell their fellow citizens to hire one of the many independent diviners who dotted the Greek world. The Athenians, for example, were told by Delphi to hire Epimenides, a Cretan diviner and all-around holy man, to help solve the problems that the ghosts of some unavenged murder victims had been causing (Pl. *Leg* 642d4–643a1; Plu. *Sol*. 12.1–4; further sources at Johnston 2008: 119–25). Clearly, even if one distinguishes heuristically between technical and natural means of divination, and between the great institutional oracles that were anchored to famous locales and the locally based independent diviners, these categories were neither mutually exclusive nor competitive to such an extent that either rejected the other's skills and authority.

SOLVING RIDDLES AND KEEPING THINGS HONEST

To return to the Athenians and their sacred meadow: the elaborate procedure that they undertook to prepare for the god's answer—folding the sheets of tin carefully so as to obscure the writing upon them, wrapping them in clumps of wool that further obscured any individual markings, and sealing the urns to prevent surreptitious manipulation—evokes a problem that one confronted (and still confronts) when practising any form of divination in any culture: How could one ensure that the results would not be influenced, purposefully or accidentally, by human intervention? In the case of 'natural' methods that relied on individuals serving as conduits for divinity, one might try to sequester the individual in question. The Pythia had little interaction with anyone outside of the Delphic sanctuary once she took office. Alternatively, if one were a freelance diviner, one might choose a child to act as a medium, on the assumption (common not only to ancient Mediterranean cultures but to many other cultures as well) that children were less likely to lie and—as long as they were kept in sight—were less likely to fall under someone else's influence (Johnston 2001). And when it came to technical means of divination, one would be careful to ensure that the materials were approximately equal in shape, size, and any other characteristic that might affect the likelihood that one representative would select itself out of the mass of others (that is, you would not want one lot to be less dense than the others in a jar, lest it leap out more easily) and that those materials could not be tinkered with—thus all those Athenians and their seals. Not that any of this was foolproof: we know that the Pythia was occasionally accused of having been paid to give an answer that benefited one party or another (Hdt. 5.63 and 90–1, 6.66, 75, and 122) though we have no evidence that she was ever found guilty, and we have descriptions of methods whereby diviners could cheat in order to make sure the enquirer got the answer he or she wanted—or the answer that someone else might wish the enquirer to receive (Lucian *Alex*.; cf. Euseb. *Praep. evang*. 209c–33c, esp. 214a–d). We also know that it was so common for diviners to stretch the truth that an army commander, such as Xenophon, took care to know enough about divination

to be able to read the entrails of a sacrificed animal himself (Xen. *Cyr*. 1.6.2; Xen. *An*. 5.6.29). And, on top of all of this, one had to be careful not to skew the results accidentally by introducing distortions from everyday life as the average person experienced it: if one got ready to incubate in hopes of receiving helpful dreams, for example, one had to be careful not to eat the wrong things beforehand (Aristotle, *On Dreams* 461a; Struck 2004: 183–7).

But even if you somehow could develop methods ensuring that no mortal or element of the material world could affect the answer you got, there was still the problem of the gods themselves. Gods might sometimes send deceptive dreams, for example. Agamemnon had one that turned out to be of this type—Zeus was purposefully sending the commander bad military advice (*Il*. 2.1–75). What is more, even when the gods responded to an enquiry truthfully, they did not necessarily do so transparently. To be a good diviner, one needed a suspicious mind and a talent for looking beyond the obvious; the surface meaning of a divine message might cleverly obscure the deeper truth. Croesus, the king of Lydia, asked Delphic Apollo how long his reign would last; Apollo answered that it would endure until a mule sat on the throne of the Medes. Croesus took this answer literally and rejoiced, thinking Apollo meant he would reign forever. But by ‘mule’ Apollo really meant Cyrus, who, like a mule, was of mixed parentage. And indeed, Cyrus became the king of the Medes and toppled Croesus (Hdt. 1.55.2 and 1.91.5).

This need to penetrate beyond the obvious is reflected not only in real-life debates about what a divine message ‘meant’ (the most famous probably being the debate in which the Athenians engaged after the Delphic Oracle told them to seek protection behind ‘wooden walls’ during the Persian Wars: Hdt. 7.140–4), but also in the broader Greek portrayal of heroes—those mortals who most closely challenge the division between humans and gods—as clever people who often use deception to conquer opposition. Odysseus hid soldiers inside a wooden horse and later escaped from danger by hiding under a ram—in each case disguising real identities behind false appearances, just as Apollo had ‘disguised’ Cyrus behind the metaphor of a mule. In myths, famous diviners were similar to heroes in other ways, too. They were usually descended from high-status families, they fought alongside other noble men in war, they married the daughters of kings. In other words, myth presented the successful acquisition and

interpretation of information from a god as being just as sure a mark of divine favour as was any other talent a hero might display (Bremmer 1996; Johnston 2008: 110–18; see also, in this volume, Ekroth, Chapter 26). Closer looks at ancient divination encourage us not only to expand our concept of the heroic, but also to recognize how permeable were the boundaries between different cultural roles that scholars tend to mark out as separate.

SPECIAL PLACES AND SPECIAL PEOPLE

But this brings us back to the question of why certain people and certain places were particularly liable to produce results. According to some myths, simply having the favour of the gods would work: Cassandra and Branchos became skilled diviners because they were beloved by Apollo, for example (Aesch. *Ag*. 1198–212; Callimachus fr. 229 Pf.). In other cases, one might acquire the talent by being born into the right family. The *Odyssey* mentions the diviner Theoklymenos, who was the son of Thestor, who also sired the diviner Kalchas; somewhere in their ancestry lurked Melampous, whose descendants also included Amphiaraos, Polyidos, and other seers (*Od*. 15.225–54). Such familial affiliations are reflected by the guilds to which some real diviners belonged during the historical period, which traced their origins back to eponymous mythic diviners—the Iamids (Iamos) and the Melampids (Melampous), for instance. Pausanias pauses in his description of an Iamid named Agias, who gave decisive advice during a great battle, to trace his lineage back to Tisamenos, another great Iamid seer (Paus. 3.11.6–10). Members of such guilds were not always believed to have a real genetic connection to the founder, however; reflected in these professional lineages is the same guild structure as can be found among those who practised other ‘intellect’ crafts in ancient Greece, such as medicine and poetry. In other words, the younger members learned from the older members, probably after paying a fee—we are back to the passage that opened this chapter, in which Prometheus makes it clear that many methods of divination must be taught. This was true not only for mortals, but even for the greatest of immortal diviners: Hermes

describes Apollo as having learned his prophetic arts from Zeus; Apollo refuses to teach Hermes the same things (*Hom. Hymn Herm.* 470–2, 534, 556; on the role of myth in the exploration of origins see also, in this volume, Fowler, Chapter 14).

But, in any case, how were the purported founders of mortal dynasties of diviners believed to have acquired *their* talents? In myths, saliva sometimes played a role: snakes licked the ears of Melampous, for example, after which he could understand animals and thus acquire special information. Or, bees might drop honey upon the lips of a future diviner while he or she was still an infant—for example, those of Iamos (Apollod. *Bibl*. 1.9.11–12; Pind. *Ol*. 6.44). This is not teaching per se, of course, but it again reflects the idea that the diviner often receives his skills from an outside agent, rather than (or in addition to) having acquired them by birth.

The question of how certain *places* became active sites of divination again can be answered by looking either at myths or at ancient scientific ideas—which sometimes converge. The mythic answers took two paths. As mentioned in 'Technical and Natural Methods', sites of oracular divination sometimes were said to have been founded by famous diviners. Interestingly, in some of these cases, myths go to the trouble of tracing those founders back to yet earlier oracular sites: Apollo's oracle at Klaros was founded by Mopsos, himself a seer and the son of Manto (whose name means 'Prophetess'), who was the daughter of the great Theban seer Teiresias. How had Manto and her son ended up in Asia Minor? They had been sent to the Delphic Oracle as spoils after the great war against Thebes, and there Manto caught the eye of a visiting Asian named Rhakios, who took her home with him. The story reflects a desire on the part of the relatively younger oracle (Klaros) to legitimate itself by a link to the older oracle (Delphi), but it also implies that whatever made Delphi special could somehow be transmitted across the sea to Klaros as well (Hes. fr. 214 Most; *Epigoni* fr. 4 West; Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.7.4; Paus. 7.3.1–2). Apollo's oracle at Didyma was similarly said to have been founded by the son of a refugee from Delphi (Callim. frr. 229 and *Ia*. IV fr. 194; Conon, *Narr*. 33; further sources and discussion in Fontenrose 1988: 106–8).

Alternatively, myths might claim that the places where great oracles were located were powerful simply because the gods, or at least something numinous, was located there. One of the foundational stories for Delphi is

given by Euripides in his *Iphigeneia in Tauris*. The oracle had originally been under the control of Gaia (‘Earth’) until Apollo killed the snake that guarded the shrine and began to prophesy there himself. Gaia had wished to give the oracle to her daughter Themis, and retaliated by giving birth to a brood of prophetic dreams that threatened to put Apollo out of business. Zeus had to step in, silencing the dreams so that Delphi might once again thrive under Apollo’s direction (Eur. *IT* 1234–83). According to another, more peaceable version of this story, Gaia gave the oracle to Themis, who gave it to the goddess Phoebe, who gave it to her brother Phoebus Apollo (Aesch. *Eum.* 1–11).

The stories managed to bring together two ideas that might have otherwise seemed contradictory, at least to us: (1) the oracle worked because Apollo, a god who was well known to be prophetic, was in charge of it (and, more specifically, although unspoken in these stories, because he periodically took possession of the Pythia, causing her to speak her prophecies); and (2) the oracle worked because there was something deep within the earth underneath it that caused prophecy to happen. The latter concept is reflected in Euripides’ story by Earth giving birth to prophetic dreams (that is, prophecy emerges from the earth), as well as by other myths and some ancient scientific explanations (not that it is always easy to tell the difference). According to one alternative myth, goats discovered a chasm from which fumes arose—fumes that made them caper about and otherwise act strangely. Humans who noticed this effect set a woman on a tripod that straddled the chasm, subsequently building the Delphic Oracle around it (Diod. Sic. 16.26.1–6). One of the scientific explanations relied on the idea of terrestrial fumes as well: according to a participant in Plutarch’s dialogue on the topic, the fumes are one of many ‘potencies’ that the earth sends forth—indeed, they are among the ‘most divine and holy’ of these potencies and the Delphic earth has them in abundance. When the Pythia—a woman who has been seated at just the right place—inhales them, they enable her soul to receive visions. Other theories assumed that it really was Apollo who made some sort of contact with the Pythia, but did not necessarily presume that Apollo literally located himself *inside* of the Pythia before she spoke. An interlocutor in one of Plutarch’s dialogues, for example, suggested that Apollo imparted movement to the Pythia’s soul from outside of her body, and that this caused her to prophesy. Yet another interlocutor proposed that Apollo

(who, being a god, was too sublime to interact with humans directly) sent a *daimon* to enter into her on his behalf (Plu. *De def. or*. 404e–f, 432d–437c).

But there was yet one more mythic version of how the Delphic Oracle came to be where it was: Apollo chose the spot, killed the dragon-like Python who guarded it, and built his temple near where the Python's body had rotted away. Earth lurks distantly in the background of this story, as the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* makes clear, but there is an implication that the oracle stands where it does simply because the god chose the place—implying that he would have been able to make it work anywhere else, as well (*Hymn Hom. Ap*. 300–74; Sourvinou-Inwood 1987).

Behind all of these explanations—some of which contradict one another, others of which support one another—lies the very basic fact that, in Greece, sources of divinatory power, be they individual people or physical sites—were remarkable enough that their origins demanded thought, even debate. As much as divination permeated everyday life for the Greeks, it nonetheless stood apart as something special.

How Did it all Work?

Plutarch's interlocutors were not the only people to wonder about how divination worked. But all such intellectual theories responded—positively or negatively—to the long-held popular belief that what the Pythia and others like her experienced was a form of *mania*, or divine madness. Indeed, the most common Greek word for divination in general, *mantike*, is formed on the same root as *mania*—even the methods that Prometheus described in the excerpt with which I began this chapter (the so-called 'technical' forms of divination) were pulled into this linguistic orbit. The independent specialist was often called a *mantis* (see, in this volume, Flower, Chapter 20), even if what he specialized in was the reading of animals' entrails or birds' motions—signs that are hard to understand as having anything to do with an altered state of consciousness such as the *man*-root implies, strictly speaking.

When it came to actually explaining how a form of divination, such as reading the entrails or the behaviour of birds, worked, the theory that was most popular among intellectuals involved cosmic *sympatheia*—that is, the idea that everything in the higher (divine) realm of the cosmos was connected to things in the lower (human) realm. If one knew where to look for signs of those connections—that is, where the greater movements of the universe were reflected in the smaller things here on earth—then one could get all kinds of information that were otherwise unavailable to humans. But of course, this prompted the further question of how *sympatheia* worked—what enabled and sustained the connections?

One answer offered by some Stoic philosophers was that the gods were behind the whole thing. Perhaps (to take reading entrails as an example) the gods changed the relevant entrails to look the way that they needed to at the very moment of slaughter, or perhaps they motivated the enquirer to choose just the right animal—that is, an animal whose entrails already looked the way they should. The Neoplatonists went even further with the sympathetic theory by suggesting that 'chains' stretched from the highest realms of the cosmos to the lowest. These tied together the different parts of the cosmos and, because of the relationships between creatures or objects on the same chain, a well-trained diviner could predict greater movements based on the movements of smaller things here on earth. According to this view, each of the gods, as well as everything else, was located on one of these chains, but the gods did not themselves *make* the sympathetic relationships work (Cic. *Div*. 1.118, 2.34–9; Polyaenus, *Strat*. 4.20; Frontin. *Str*. 1.11.14–15; Struck 2004: 204–38). Still other theorists took another approach. Demokritos denied that entrails were truly divinatory and argued that what they really revealed were the conditions under which the slaughtered animals had lived. If the entrails indicated that the animal had been healthy, then it had lived in a healthy environment, and it was likely that people would thrive there as well (Cic. *Div*. 1.131 = DK 68 A 138; Hor. *Sat*. 2.8.6). Many other technical methods of divination were explained with reference to similar sympathetic theories. Debates about divination, then, opened onto much greater debates about the nature of the cosmos and its inhabitants, implicitly or explicitly (Struck 2004; Johnston 2008).

MAGIC AND DIVINATION

By the Classical period and perhaps earlier, diviners were already linked with the sort of people whom we tend to call magicians. In Plato's *Republic*, for example, *manteis* were also credited with the ability to write binding spells, and in Pindar's fourth *Pythian*, Medea, who is famously a magician, prophesies at length to the Argonauts (Pl. *Resp*. 364b–365a; Pind. *Pyth*. 4.11–56). One salient thing that these two types of ritual experts share is a characteristic that I mentioned at the start of this chapter: both the diviner and the magician claim to know things that the average person does not, and to be able to use that knowledge to solve the sorts of problems that other people confront in daily life. With respect to that term 'average person', it is important to remember that this includes most of the people who served as priests and priestesses. In Greece, after all, there were very few 'professional' priests or priestesses, who remained in the position for their whole lives or depended upon it for their livelihood. Rather, most priesthoods were passed around among members of the elite class (or members of elite subgroups, such as certain noble families). Almost every Greek adult knew how to perform basic priestly duties, and very few cults required their personnel to keep these duties secret. In contrast, diviners and magicians supported themselves by performing rituals, and kept hidden at least part of their ritual knowledge, not only because they considered such techniques to be potentially dangerous in untrained hands, but also because such techniques constituted trade secrets—why give away profitable information? We should also include, in the same group as diviners and magicians, professional initiators such as *orpheotelestai*, who offered yet another sort of religious expertise for a price—and, indeed, the person who called him or herself a diviner or magician also sometimes claimed to be an 'initiator' as well (Johnston 1999: 100–23, 2008: 110–25).

Magic and divination, then, were both pursuits in which professional specialists could make a living, and could do so apart from an official cult located in a specific place. The ability to operate outside of official cult, of course, made such experts more available to people at the very moments when they were needed—in most cases, there was no need to travel to

Delphi or Dodona if a reliable diviner was easily at hand. Moreover, despite the fact the great institutional oracles had more prestige, even they did not scorn the independent operators. As mentioned in 'Technical and Natural Methods', above, from an early period Delphi occasionally recommended that troubled individuals or cities hire agents whom we would probably call magicians—Epimenides was one of them and, in another case, Delphi recommended that the Spartans hire *psychagogoi* ('invokers of souls') to stop problems that an angry ghost was causing at the local Temple of Athena. The Oracle at Dodona, similarly, had once been asked whether an enquirer should hire a particular *psychagogos* named Dorios. Branchos, the first prophet at Didyma, was reputed to have used what looks like a magical spell to cleanse the people of Miletos after a plague (on Sparta: Johnston 1999: 108–9; Dodona: Lhôte 2006: no. 144; and Christidis, Dakaris, and Vokotopoulou 1999; Branchos: Clem. Al. *Strom.* 5.8.48 674 P). Notably, however, there is no record of the great oracles encouraging or endorsing specific *practices* that can be called 'magical'. That is, although we frequently hear about the Delphic Oracle telling cities how to establish cults to a new god or hero, we never hear about it endorsing improved versions of spells. Apollo's oracle at Klaros warned a city that a magician was using wax figures and magical poisons to send the plague against it, but assured the city that Artemis would use her own torches to melt the figures and dissolve the poisons—thus, there was no need for human magic to counter what the wicked magician was doing (Várhelyi 2001).

What might explain this lack of interest in magic on the part of the oracles? Remarkably, scholars have paid almost no attention to this question; here I can only briefly sketch part of the answer. Namely, most of the demands that magic addresses (in ancient Greece or any other culture) are pressing in nature (a lover is straying and you want her back; you've placed a bet on the chariot race tomorrow and are not sure your horse will win) or relatively small in scale (your own child is ill, rather than all of the children in the city; your own crops are failing, rather than all of the crops). For problems like these, one needs help quickly and cannot ask one's neighbours to help fund a trip to a distant oracle. Convenience, in the guise of the local practitioner, might trump the prestige that a distant oracle carried. Notably, on almost every occasion that an oracle did involve itself with ritual techniques we might categorize

as magic, the problem affected an entire city and had been going on for some time. The one exception, the enquiry about the *psychagogos* named Dorios, is found on a lead tablet from Dodona, a means of oracular divination that, our records suggest, was more likely than others to be used for personal concerns. Perhaps, if we had a fuller publication of the Dodonian lead tablets, we might find other enquiries that involve magic and its practitioners.

Formally, the present volume does not cover the period we call late antiquity, but given that there happens to remain from this time far more evidence concerning magical practices than from earlier periods (thanks largely to the preservation of Greek papyri in Egypt) it is worth taking a look to see what we might learn. Notably, the practitioners whom we assume created and used the spells recorded on the papyri focused a lot of their attention on divination. A large number of the spells offer techniques for obtaining special information, whether it be about the future or about the nature of the cosmos and the gods themselves. Frequently, these methods promised that the magician would have a face-to-face encounter with a god—something far beyond what someone who travelled to Delphi for a consultation with Apollo could ever hope to experience (Johnston 2008: 155–61). Interestingly, quite a few spells also teach the reader how to cause someone else to have a deceptive divinatory dream—that is, to do what only gods could do according to earlier literary sources such as the *Iliad* (Johnston 2010). In these contexts, in other words, humans came closer than Prometheus could ever have imagined to making themselves the equals of the gods. Is this to be taken as a sign of the times (Lane Fox 1986)? Or as a characteristic of the particular people who created these spells or troubled to record them so carefully? Again, scholarship, up until now, has responded with virtual silence; future attention to such questions would surely bring answers that will help us understand both divination and magic better than we do now.

Suggested Reading

The most recent general treatment of divination in ancient Greece, with in-depth discussion of the issues treated here and others, is Johnston 2008. Flower 2008 focuses on the figure of the independent diviner and

Stoneman 2011 on institutional oracles; Bowden 2005 looks at the Delphic Oracle and its historical relationship to a powerful city. Johnston and Struck 2005 offers essays on a variety of ancient Greek and Roman divinatory methods within their cultural, religious, and semiotic contexts; Vernant 1974 is also still very valuable, especially for comparative work. Manetti 1993 [1987] is important for understanding what set Greek divinatory methods apart from others in the ancient Mediterranean, and Struck 2004 for understanding how the divinatory frame of mind affected the development of other intellectual practices in antiquity, particularly literary criticism. Beyond these books, there are a number of monographs and articles treating individual topics; some are included below. Especially important are Parker 1985, Maurizio 1995, Dillery 2005, and, for late antiquity, Graf 1999.

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CHAPTER 33

EPIPHANY

VERITY PLATT

INTRODUCTION

IN Figure 33.1, a votive relief from the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron in Attica dated to the fourth century BCE, a large family group, led by a married couple, approaches the goddess, who stands behind an altar, holding a bow and libation dish, together with her companion deer. The ox and its handler at the front of the procession indicate that the group is about to offer a sacrifice, and, indeed, an accompanying inscription tells us that 'Aristonike, the wife of Antiphates from the deme of Thorai, prayed and dedicated [this] to Artemis' (*SEG* 52.170; Despinis 2002). One of the most striking features of this relief—and many similar examples from Classical Attica—is that ritual activity within the sanctuary is commemorated in the form of an encounter with the deity herself, who acknowledges and welcomes her worshippers as a visible, anthropomorphic being, her divine status demonstrated by her superhuman size. In visual terms, we might say that the family's visit to Brauron is celebrated as an experience of Artemis' epiphany.

FIGURE 33.1 Votive relief from the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron, Attica, *c*.350–330 BCE. (Inv. 1151, Archaeological Museum, Brauron)

How might we interpret this iconography? The difficulties it raises go to the heart of many challenging questions about ancient Greek religion, such as the nature and accessibility of the gods, the significance of ritual, the role of belief, and the relationship between collective practice and individual subjectivity. It also illustrates how religious artefacts—whether images or texts—seldom yield straightforward answers. For example, are we to take the relief literally? Does the scene suggest that Aristonike and her relatives actually *saw* Artemis when they prayed and dedicated their sacrifice to her? Does the *phiale* she holds indicate that the goddess has come to join in the sacrifice performed in her honour? Or does the figure of Artemis instead correspond to the statue that stood in her sanctuary, suggesting that an encounter with a cult image was itself a form of epiphany? If so, what might this imply about the power and significance of religious art? If we take the relief to be operating on a symbolic level, could it imply that Artemis was ‘present’ during the ritual in a more abstract sense? If so, her appearance in the scene might be better understood as an ‘expressive symbol’ of her special relationship with her worshippers at Brauron, visualized by the artist according to the iconographic conventions of anthropomorphism (Tanner 2006: 85–7). But

where do these conventions come from? And how do they gain their authority as authentic representations of the gods?

The Brauron relief gives no explicit answers, maintaining a careful ambiguity about the event it commemorates. What it does demonstrate, however, is that, in Classical Attic religious iconography, ritual communication with the gods was routinely expressed through the representation of their visible presence. Artemis' idealized features and monumental stature in the Brauron relief echo the 'beauty and magnitude' (*kallos kai megethos*) of deities as they are described when they appear to mortals within texts such as the *Homeric Hymns*, drawing upon a long tradition of epiphanic encounter within Greek literature. Artemis' visibility in the context of dedication also literalizes the idea—implicit in myriad textual and visual sources—that the gods make themselves present to witness ritual acts performed in their honour. In this sense, Artemis' epiphany might be understood as an intensification of the contact with the divine that is sought through religious activity in general, and which is a characteristic feature of the reciprocity that underlies so many aspects of Greek religious practice (Parker 1998). Within the logic of the relief, Artemis' manifestation before her worshippers demonstrates the efficacy of Aristonike's prayer and dedication, the altar positioned between them emphasizing the power of sacrifice to bring gods and mortals together, at the same time as it marks their difference in status (Naiden 2012). Furthermore, the display of the relief itself within the Brauronian sanctuary commemorates and perpetuates Aristonike's original offering, guiding the ritual behaviour and expectations of future visitors: further prayers and sacrifices, it is implied, will also be rewarded by the beneficent presence of the goddess (Platt 2011: 31–50; on life-cycle rituals and the Brauronian sanctuary, see, in this volume, Hitch, Chapter 35).

DEFINING AND CONTEXTUALIZING EPIPHANY

As a direct, unmediated manifestation of divine presence, epiphany might be understood as the purest form of contact between mortals and immortals, whereby the gods reveal themselves 'face to face' rather than communicating through oracles or divinatory signs that must be decoded by religious personnel. Yet epiphanies are inevitably culturally mediated. Despite the influence of Greek epiphany on Christian modes of revelation (Mitchell 2004), we must be wary of applying Christian language, such as Paul's notion of a 'face-to-face' encounter with God at 1 *Corinthians* 13.12, to a phenomenon that is grounded in very different concepts of deity and forms of religious practice. Most importantly, Greek epiphany emerges from the manifold complexities of polytheism, whereby the ability to visualize, identify, and represent divine forms is fundamental to the detailed taxonomies that comprise the divine pantheon (Versnel 2011: 23–149). In this sense, epiphanies play a crucial role within Greek 'theology' in that they provide what I have elsewhere defined as 'cognitive reliability', both for the gods' very existence and the iconographic conventions or innovations by which they were known to their worshippers (Platt 2011). At the same time, epiphanies are fluid and extraordinary events that have the potential to surprise, confuse, and unsettle their recipients, so that attempts to develop clear taxonomies of epiphany (as we find in the encyclopaedic works of early twentieth-century scholars such as Friedrich Pfister) tend to downplay the cognitive dissonance that the phenomenon often generates (e.g. Pfister 1924; Pax 1962); indeed, one might argue that it is critical to ancient Greek discourse on epiphany that divine manifestation is itself resistant to human modes of description and classification.

For a mortal to experience an epiphany may be a sign of special status, a privilege granted to mythical heroes and those who are particularly pious, blessed, or desired by the gods. Yet, as Hera comments in the *Iliad*, 'The gods are dangerous when they appear in manifest form (*enargeis*)' (*Il.* 20.131), and Greek myth abounds with examples of humans whose encounter with a godhead is fatal (such as Semele and Aktaion) or results in injury or mishap (such as Anchises and Teiresias). Moreover, as polymorphous beings who shift between multiple forms and identities at will, the gods have a habit of appearing in disguise, and are seldom easily identified: even Odysseus remarks to Athena that, 'It is difficult, goddess, for a mortal man to know you when he meets you, however wise he may

be, for you take what shape you will' (*Od*. 13.312–13; see Buxton 2009 and Turkeltaub 2003).

Accordingly, epiphanies tend to fall into two main categories, which Georgia Petridou has defined in terms of 'Cult' and 'Crisis' in her thorough study of Greek epiphanic narratives (Petridou 2006: 96–261). On the one hand, they can be ritually invoked and prepared for, during festivals such as the Theoxenia, in which the gods were formally invited to banquets in their honour (Bruit 1989, 2004; Jameson 1994); the Epidemia or Theophania (celebrations of a god's birth or first arrival at a cult site); momentous occasions such as the Epopteia of the god, which formed the climax of initiation into certain mystery cults (Clinton 2004); or through rites of incubation practised in healing sanctuaries, in which the god was encountered in the context of dreams (see also, in this volume, Graf, Chapter 34). On the other hand, epiphanies can occur unexpectedly in extreme situations (such as the tumult of battle) and in remote or liminal spaces (such as mountain tops, woodland glades, and the seashore), often to dramatic effect. Thus, the Artemis who appears in the Brauron relief, clothed in a long *peplos* alongside the accoutrements of sacrifice, is encountered within the safe and beneficent context of a ritual act performed within her sanctuary; conversely, when the mythical hero Aktaion accidentally beholds Artemis bathing naked in a woodland spring, he upsets the propriety of divine law (or *themis*), and must suffer her fatal retribution (e.g. Callim. *Hymn* 5.107–18). In both cases, the implication is that the asymmetrical relationship between gods and humans must be carefully negotiated, with the understanding that epiphany should depend upon divine agency rather than mortal imposition.

In practice, these categories of epiphany are closely related and often inform each other: for example, dream epiphanies do not take place only during incubation, as many cases in Artemidoros' *Oneirokritika* ('Interpretation of Dreams') attest, while unanticipated epiphanies often borrow the features of ritual, such as when deities appear in the form of their cult statues (Platt 2011: 253–87). Most importantly, epiphanies that take place outside the context of cult practice are almost always responded to in ritual terms. We can see this ritual imperative enacted in one of the most influential poetic explorations of epiphany, the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, which probes the complexities that arise when the goddess of desire is compelled to fall for a mortal man, and risks compromising her

divine status and harming her beloved in the very manifestation of her seductive powers (Faulkner 2008). Disguising herself as a young maiden so as not to frighten Anchises, Aphrodite nevertheless projects such *kallos kai megethos* that he hails her as a deity, 'Artemis or Leto or golden Aphrodite or Themis of noble birth or bright-eyed Athena . . .' Hoping to avoid any impiety by greeting the goddess with multiple names (as in kletic hymns, which 'call' for a divinity's presence by listing several titles and epithets), Anchises' immediate response is to make the epiphany 'safe' by honouring her presence with ritual, promising that, 'For you . . . I will set up an altar, and I will perform for you beautiful sacrifices . . . And I wish that you in turn may have kindly-disposed feelings (*thymos*) towards me' (*Hom. Hymn. Aph*. 92–106; trans. West 2003). In this sense, the mythical epiphany that is staged within the context of the hymn echoes the relationship between divine manifestation and ritual response that characterizes attitudes to epiphany held by the poem's audience. (On the Greek concept of impiety see also, in this volume, Bowden, Chapter 22.)

In both mythological and historical contexts, epiphanies often have an aetiological function, as events that must be acknowledged, responded to, and celebrated in appropriately pious acts by their mortal witnesses, whether through the performance of sacrifices, the foundation of cults and festivals, or the setting up of temples, images, and inscriptions. Thus, while the *Homeric Hymns* often commemorate mythical epiphanies related to the foundation of cults in honour of their respective deities (such as Demeter at Eleusis and Apollo at Delphi), encounters with the gods by historical individuals prompt similar responses. Consider the sanctuary of Pan on the slopes of the Athenian Acropolis: Herodotos tells us that it was established together with annual sacrifices and a torch race following the runner Philippides' encounter with the god on Mount Parthenion on his way to seek help from the Spartans at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE (Hdt. 6.105–6; Harrison 2000: 82–92). In this and numerous other examples, the fleeting and highly subjective experience of epiphany by individuals is converted through the establishment of cultic honours into a stable and enduring recognition of the god's power and potential presence within a specific location.

The commemoration of epiphanies in the form of physical monuments and repeated rituals is arguably a necessary response to a phenomenon that is characteristically elusive: as H. S. Versnel memorably asked in an

influential article of 1987, ‘What did ancient man see when he saw a god?’ (see also Versnel 2011: 37–43, with further bibliography). In many cases, the suppression of detail in epiphanic texts and images has important theological implications, whereby the desire for access to the gods is tempered by a keen awareness of the limits of mortal knowledge. When Aphrodite unrobes herself before Anchises in the *Homeric Hymn*, for example, the text dwells upon the dazzling beauty of her garments and jewellery but falls silent at the moment of bodily revelation (86–90, 160–5). Epiphanies in Homeric epic are similarly resistant to interpretation, characterized by disguise, metamorphosis, and verbal ambiguity. The encounter between Achilles and Athena at *Iliad* 1.197–201, in which it is unclear whether the ‘terrible flashing eyes’ described by the poet apply to heroic anger or divine radiance, offers an enduringly problematic case (Stevens 2002; Turkeltaub 2005).

Such economy of expression is typical of epiphanic narrative: we are given few details about Philippides’ encounter with Pan except for the god’s declaration of support to the Athenians, for example, and are told merely that Pan ‘appeared’ (*phanenai*) and ‘fell around’ or ‘embraced’ him (*peripiptei*). Just as with Artemis’ depiction in the Brauron relief, this passage could be read in literal or metaphorical terms, as a physical encounter with the overwhelming body of the god himself or an evocation of the ‘panic’ which could beset hot and weary runners in the Greek mountains or confused warriors in the thick of battle (Borgeaud 1988: 88–129; Garland 1992: 51–4). It is important to note that Pan’s manifestation on Mount Parthenion is predominantly verbal, for, despite the prominence of terms such as ‘vision’ (*opsis*) in the language of epiphany, epiphany is a multi-sensory phenomenon that is also experienced in the form of divine utterances, sonic effects (e.g. the howling of Hekate’s hounds in *I.Stratonikeia* 10, discussed in Belayche 2009), extreme natural phenomena (e.g. the storm, earthquake, and avalanche that helped local heroes drive invading Gauls away from Delphi in 279 BCE: Paus. 1.4.4, 10.23.1–2), or even scent (e.g. Aristid. *Or*. 43.41). In this sense, the gods’ manifestations in forms accessible to human sense perception are difficult to distinguish from demonstrations of their powers (or *aretai*) in the form of ‘miracles’ (Lührmann 1975; Versnel 1987: 42–3; Graf 2004: 113).

Moreover, when the gods make themselves visible, they do not always appear anthropomorphically, but can also take the form of animals,

attributes, or symbols related to their cults or domains of authority (Aston 2011). As Michael Flower points out in his discussion of Plutarch's *Life of Timoleon* (this volume, Chapter 20), for example, we are told that divine support for Timoleon's campaign against Dionysios II of Syracuse in 344 BCE was indicated not only by a dream vision of Demeter and Persephone, but also the miraculous appearance over his ship of 'a torch, like those used in the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries' (Plut. *Tim.* 8). Here, anthropomorphic epiphany in an oneiric context is supported and confirmed by the waking vision of an object associated with the goddesses' cult, in the form of a metonymic or *pars pro toto* epiphany, in which an attribute or symbol of the god is encountered rather than divine body itself (Petridou 2006: 62–76).

This broader conceptualization of epiphany complicates the distinction previously drawn between 'direct' epiphanies and more mediated forms of communication with the divine, such as oracles and portents. Although epiphanies may purport to reveal the forms (*eidea*) or authority (*dynamis*) of the gods, their significance is not always self-evident, but requires careful decoding so that the rupturing effects of divine incursion into mortal experience can be acknowledged and responded to appropriately (cf. Burkert 2005, on epiphany and divination). Significantly, Plutarch claims that Demeter and Persephone first appeared in dreams to Persephone's priestesses at Corinth, so that the initial epiphany is channelled through cultic personnel with privileged access to the deities in question. A similar device is found in the section on epiphanies of Athena in the well-known Temple Chronicle from Lindos, in which the goddess' concern for her worshippers is demonstrated in repeated visitations to the cult's priest (*Syll.*^{3} 725, section D; see Higbie 2003; Koch Piettre 2005; and Platt 2011: 124–69). Plutarch then tells us that Demeter and Persephone's role in the Corinthian expedition is confirmed by seers (*manteis*), who link the torch epiphany to the priestesses' dream visions, and explain Persephone's involvement by referring to her abduction from Sicily by Hades. In this way, the goddesses' support is demonstrated by a double manifestation, in both the private realm of dreams and the public context of the ship. This is confirmed by a doubling of religious personnel, and rationalized through the application of mythological lore. Likewise, we find that epiphany narratives are often accompanied by oracles, in

which the 'meaning' of the event is rationalized and legitimized by cultic personnel (Platt 2011: 150–2; Kindt 2012: 49–50).

THE POLITICS OF EPIPHANY

The Brauron relief that introduces this chapter was displayed publicly within Artemis' sanctuary, yet employs the visual language of epiphany to make a statement about the ritual practices and personal hopes of the family group, or *oikos*. In this sense, it complements numerous inscriptions from Greek sanctuaries that commemorate private dedications made *kata opsin* ('according to a vision') or *kat' onar* ('according to a dream-vision'), many of which come from sanctuaries that encouraged personal relationships with their resident deities, such as healing cults (Van Straten 1976; Renberg 2003, 2010). Plutarch's *Life of Timoleon*, however, recalls a pair of epiphanies that have important political and military implications: experienced individually by official cultic personnel and collectively by the army, they are afforded an authority that confers sanctity upon, and therefore legitimizes, the Corinthian invasion of Sicily. This strategic appropriation of epiphany at the state level is a key feature of the relationship between religion and politics in ancient Greece. It is often discussed in cynical terms, most notably Herodotos' account of Peisistratus' staged epiphany of 'Athena' in the form of a statuesque maiden called Phye in order to legitimize his return to Athens as tyrant in 556/5 BCE (Hdt 1.60); numerous 'false' epiphanies likewise appear in Polyaenus' *Strategems*, where they form a key weapon in the arena of psychological warfare (Petridou 2006: 135–44; Platt forthcoming).

However, the efficacy of such 'simulated' manifestations was dependent upon a widespread concept of epiphanic authenticity; Herodotos' scepticism about Phye notwithstanding, divine appearances are usually treated as genuine by ancient authors, and are invested with cultic, political, and military significance across a wide range of historiographical and epigraphic texts. If we are not simply to dismiss epiphanic testimonies as either demonstrations of mass delusion or convenient tools of social manipulation, this poses something of a

problem for modern scholars. First, we must be sensitive to the role of performance in sacred contexts, whereby humans dressed as gods (such as Phye) could, like statues, be understood in epiphanic terms, especially when encountered in ritual processions or other extraordinary conditions that blurred the boundaries between the real and represented for worshippers (Connor 1987; Sinos 1993; Kavoulaki 1999; Platt 2011: 13–20). Second, we must take seriously the overwhelming evidence for the role played by epiphany in political and military decision-making, especially during the Hellenistic and Imperial periods, when manifestations of deities offered a powerful means by which Greek states and sanctuaries could define, protect, and celebrate their Hellenic identity and autonomy (Pritchett 1979: 11–46; Garbrah 1986; Chaniotis 2005: 143–65; Platt 2011: 124–69).

That epiphany was treated as a genuine religious phenomenon which had very real political currency is demonstrated by a fascinating inscription dated *c*.300 BCE from the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros (*IG* IV^4 950; Furley and Bremer 2001: no. 6.4; Kolde 2003). As Fritz Graf discusses (this volume, Chapter 34), Epidauros provides some of our best epigraphic evidence for epiphanic testimonies from the late Classical period; indeed, Strabo tells us that the sanctuary's fame was due to both the 'manifest presence' (*epiphaneia*) of Asklepios and 'the votive tablets on which his cures have been inscribed' (8.6.15). Dedicated to Apollo Maleatas and Asklepios by 'Isyllos of Epidauros, the son of Sokrates', the text records a sacred law setting out the details of an annual procession and sacrifice in honour of the two gods by elite local citizens, during which the latter are to reaffirm their commitment to an aristocratic constitution (10–26). The *lex sacra* is accompanied by an oracle confirming the benefits of inscribing the paean (written by Isyllos) which was to be performed during the procession (32–6). This is followed by the paean itself, which celebrates the conception and birth of Asklepios and the foundation of his cult at Epidauros (37–61), together with a final passage in hexameters which, like the *iamata* (or 'healing miracles') set up at Epidauros, reports a salvific epiphany of Asklepios to a sick young boy, possibly Isyllos' son (62–84). In this case, however, Asklepios appears not as a healing deity but 'shining in golden armour' like a god on the Homeric battlefield (68–9), and announces that he must postpone his medical duties in order to aid the Spartan resistance to Philip of

Macedonia (who invaded the Peloponnese in 338 BCE). Isyllos tells us that he accordingly hurried ‘to announce the god’s coming to the Lakedaimonians’, and that, following their subsequent salvation from Philip, the Spartans founded a *theoxenia* (a ritual of hospitality) in Asklepios’ honour (77–82). He has recorded these events, Isyllos concludes, in honour of Asklepios’ *arete*—his ‘glorious deeds’ (84).

By juxtaposing such diverse texts (including a sacred law, oracle, paean, and epiphany narrative), the inscription cuts across many categories of late Classical religious and political life that are often studied in isolation. It thus combines a personal testimony of therapeutic epiphany (albeit one with epic overtones) with political concerns relating both to local civic government and a broader Panhellenic commitment to oligarchy in the face of expanding Macedonian kingship. By adopting and adapting epiphanic discourse to enhance the status of local religion whilst promoting strategic political alliances both at Epidauros and across the Peloponnese, Isyllos looks back to Archaic and Classical forms of invoking and celebrating divine presence, whilst anticipating the increasingly prominent role that epiphany would play on the political stages of the Hellenistic Mediterranean. In celebrating the birth of Asklepios at Epidauros (in an unusual retelling of the myth that suppresses the god’s Thessalian origins in order to tie the event to local cult), the paean echoes texts such as the *Homeric Hymns* which commemorate the birth or first arrival of a deity as a form of epiphany (Sineux 1999). Indeed, Asklepios’ autochthony is celebrated as a double narrative of manifestation—first in Apollo’s erotic epiphany to his mother Aigla, and second in Asklepios’ birth ‘in the sweet-smelling sanctuary’, with Apollo himself serving alongside the Fates in the role of midwife.

These aetiological epiphanies serve to enhance the status of both sanctuary and polis at Epidauros by claiming a divine parentage and local origin for its patron deity. Like the double epiphany in Plutarch’s *Life of Timoleon*, they are also ratified by religious experts, in this case an oracle which confirms the legitimacy of the hymn’s claims and the appropriate context for its performance. The mythical epiphanies celebrated in the paean promote a tradition of divine presence at Epidauros which is maintained right up to the time of Isyllos himself, as he demonstrates in the first-person narrative of the final section. Here, the proofs of Asklepios’ healing powers that are found in the more conventional *iamata*

are combined with a salvific epiphany familiar from military history, whereby the god's personal declaration of support for the Spartans echoes Pan's epiphany to Philippides before the Battle of Marathon, confirming divine aid against external aggressors; as with Pan at Athens, so Asklepios' role as a saviour god is commemorated by the foundation of a festival in his honour at Sparta.

The so-called 'Hymn of Isyllos' is notable as a record of the initiative taken by an individual political and religious actor in an attempt to promote his personal ideologies and alliances. At the same time, it demonstrates the important role that epiphany played in Greek cultic, civic, and diplomatic affairs, as a means of claiming divine authority that could supplement or even circumvent conventional decision-making processes. Through the communicative channels opened up by incubation in the context of a healing cult, Isyllos has direct access to Asklepios himself, and a means of legitimizing the political affiliations of Epidauros during a particularly critical moment in the history of mainland Greece. However, despite their potential to justify rupture and change through direct demonstrations of divine agency, epiphanies nevertheless gain validity through their incorporation into a network of pre-existing traditions, and ratification by alternative sources of divine authority. Thus, the personal miracle narrative of the inscription's final section is endorsed through its commemoration in ritual (in Asklepios' Spartan *theoxenia*), while its display alongside the paean and oracle on the stele itself confirms the sanctity of Epidauros as a site for authentic epiphanies of the god. In this way, the epiphanies commemorated in the inscription bring the mythical past, historical present, and ritual future together in celebration of Asklepios' ongoing presence at Epidauros, while the text itself stands within the sanctuary as an enduring material marker (*mnema*) of his glorious accomplishments (*aretai*).

The pattern of salvific epiphany, ritual commemoration, and epigraphic monument employed by Isyllos in response to the Macedonian invasion of the Peloponnese would become firmly established in the centuries that followed, as Greek sanctuaries and poleis claimed epiphanic authority for the establishment of rituals and temples, and even their right to 'sacred inviolability' (*asylia*) from external aggressors (Rigsby 1996). From the third century BCE, the publicization of epiphanies became a key tool in diplomatic relations between Hellenistic states, most famously

demonstrated by the monumental corpus of inscriptions from Magnesia-on-the-Maeander. This records correspondence with cities and kings across the Greek world requesting recognition of a festival and games in celebration of an epiphany of Artemis Leucophryene, the city's patron goddess, in 221 BCE (*IMagn*. 16; Slater and Summa 2006; Platt 2011: 151–60, with further bibliography). For a small polis overshadowed by mighty royal neighbours, the right to *asylia* demonstrated by Artemis' appearance offered a welcome strategy for safeguarding Magnesia's autonomy, which bypassed more powerful political agents by claiming direct communication with the divine whilst evoking the authority of past tradition. Likewise, inscriptions testifying to epiphanic salvation from external threats, including the Roman Empire, are found across Hellenistic Asia Minor, from the Lindian Chronicle on Rhodes to Pergamon, Karia, and even Chersonesos, on the shores of the Black Sea (e.g. *OGI* 331.51–2; *I.Stratonikeia* 10; *IOSPE* I^2 344).

Perhaps surprisingly, given the prominence of the term today, it is in the context of Hellenistic diplomacy that the substantive noun *epiphaneia* is first used to refer specifically to divine appearances, as opposed to its more general meaning of 'visible surface' or 'sudden appearance'. It first appears in an inscription from Kos commemorating the Delphic festival known as the Soteria, which celebrated the salvific epiphanies of Apollo and local heroes at Delphi in 279 BCE, when they drove off invading Gauls from the venerable Panhellenic sanctuary (*Syll*.^{3} 398; see Austin 2006: no. 60). Derived from the verb *epiphainein*, 'to show' or 'make manifest', *epiphaneia* emphasizes active presence, a 'coming into appearance' 'upon', 'near', or 'by' a beholder that, crucially, occurs at the god's initiative, as opposed to terms such as 'vision' (*opsis*) and *enarges* ('clear' or 'visible') that focus on the subjective experience of mortal witnesses (Koch Piettre 1996: 396–8; Platt 2011: 149–51). It is surely significant that *epiphaneia* came to lexical prominence at a time when Hellenistic kings were emphasizing their own visible illustriousness and godlike authority by means of the title Epiphanes, which was adopted by several rulers, including Ptolemy V (204–180 BCE) and Antiochus IV (175–64 BCE), and later became a popular epithet for Roman emperors in the Greek East (Pfister 1924: 308–9; Nock 1972: vol. 1, 152–6; La Rocca 1994; Mittag 2006: 128–39).

Whether applied to deities or kings, the vocabulary of epiphany suggests a dynamic agency—a means of asserting presence and influencing the course of events that transcends conventional mortal capabilities whilst demanding acknowledgement and honours in keeping with traditional concepts of reciprocity. This verbal shift demonstrates how epiphany could play a key role in the process of religious change: as a concept that was central to religious thought throughout antiquity and yet a vital tool for innovation, it could be evoked or appropriated in myriad contexts by a wide range of individuals and social groups. Moreover, the subjective character of epiphanic experience and the abbreviated, often ambiguous nature of epiphanic language meant that the phenomenon continued to be open to projection and reinvention; indeed, as the early Christians realized, epiphanies could also be powerful catalysts for conversion.

CONCLUSION

While Hellenistic inscriptions tell us much about the reception of epiphanic phenomena, they are frustratingly laconic about the nature of epiphanic experience itself, echoing literary epiphanies in their economy of expression. Given epiphany's crucial role in the conceptual underpinnings of the Greek religious system, this reticence is perhaps what makes it so compelling—and frustrating—as an object of study. Because epiphany is inevitably transformed in the process of its verbal or visual mediation, it is impossible to recover what ancient worshippers might have 'actually' experienced, or indeed to distinguish between 'real' and 'false' epiphanies, or strategic mobilization and cynical manipulation of cultural tropes. For the modern scholar, epiphany can only exist at the level of discourse: the challenge is thus to identify, contextualize, and elucidate discursive trends in the cultural treatment of epiphany without losing sight of either the phenomenon's validity for Greek worshippers or its propensity to resist straightforward categorization and interpretation. As we have seen, epiphanies can be ritually invoked or sudden and unexpected, 'real' or staged, anthropomorphic or symbolic, mythical or

historical, individual or collective, ratifications of the existing order or catalysts for change. They demonstrate how closely entwined religion and politics could be, but they do not fit neatly into the polis model of Greek religion, given their significance as *aitia* for traditional cult practice and their role both in the introduction of 'new gods' (such as Pan) and the cultivation of more personal relationships with the divine (as in healing cult). Moreover, to ask 'What does it mean to see the gods?' inevitably highlights the limitations of approaches to Greek religion that prioritize *praxis* over theological and cognitive dimensions. In this respect, the scholarship on epiphany is very much in its infancy, and new voices are sure to be welcomed.

Suggested Reading

Pfister 1924 refers to important textual sources, distinguishing between epic, mythic, cultic, and Christian epiphanies. Koch Piettre 1988 explores epiphany's role within the Greek religious imagination, while Platt 2011 covers Greek attitudes to epiphany from the *Homeric Hymns* to Imperial prose literature, focusing on the role of visual representation. A comprehensive study is forthcoming from Georgia Petridou, while Versnel 1987 asks important questions about the theological dilemmas raised by epiphany. Readers will find also much helpful discussion in *Illinois Classical Studies* 2004. Those interested in the relationship between Greco-Roman and Christian models of epiphany will find much in Pax 1962, Lane Fox 1986: 102–67, Mitchell 2004, and Miller 2007: 21–39.

While recent scholarship has focused on epiphany's political and ideological aspects, many aspects remain understudied. In particular, the questions epiphany raises about subjective experience of the divine should make it of interest to those working on religion and individuality, the social history of emotions, and the thorny issue of 'belief' in both religion and philosophy (on which, see Mackey forthcoming). As cognitive approaches to religion (such as Boyer 1994; Guthrie 2001; and Tremlin 2006) become increasingly of interest to those working on Greek religion (e.g. Kindt 2012: 36–54), epiphany offers an interesting test case. Gabriel Herman (2011) has recently tackled the tricky question of what might have 'caused' such experiences, relating crisis epiphanies to the transhistorical

psychological phenomenon known as the 'Third Man Factor' or 'Sensed Presence' (see also Geiger 2009); however, the jury is still out on how findings in neuroscience might help us better understand such subjective experiences within their historical contexts.

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CHAPTER 34

HEALING

FRITZ GRAF

INTRODUCTION

IN their still unsurpassed 1945 book on Asklepios, Emma and Ludwig Edelstein emphasized what, after them, has slowly become the new *communis opinio*, that in ancient thought and society there was no sharp division between scientific and religious medicine: the dichotomy was inherited from nineteenth-century rationalists, not from the Greek doctors. The Edelsteins argued against an earlier consensus that understood the rise of Asklepios as a sign of Greek decadence (Edelstein and Edelstein 1945, II: 139); its perhaps most extreme exponent, von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, claimed that 'if I were a physician, I would not want a bust of Asklepios in my study' (Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1931/32, II: 229). The main division in the Greek understanding of healing—and, with it, the understanding of how humans became sick—was not to be found in the dichotomy between 'temple medicine' (a misleading term, since no sanctuary had its own medical staff) and scientific medicine, but between an understanding that saw illness as caused and sent by antagonized or outright hostile superhuman powers, gods, or demons, who therefore also

have the power to cure, on the one side, and as a more or less natural thing that happens according to some law of nature on the other side. But in this latter case, human intelligence and craft might still fall short from finding the correct cure and the gods could be asked to step in with a more efficient therapy, whereas, in the former case, healing was the sole result of ritual actions, prayers, purification, or exorcism. The anonymous doctor who wrote *On the Sacred Disease*, after all, did not attack the personnel in the sanctuaries of Asklepios but the itinerant purifiers and exorcists: it was they who vied with the doctors for clients.

This dichotomy shapes my approach. In the section 'Healing in the Temple', I will look at a number of cases in which Asklepios is the key agent, both from the Epidaurian healing inscriptions, the *iamata*, and from other sanctuaries of the god. In the section 'Transgression and Disease', I will analyse a few cases where healing is the result of ritual purification and its emotional equivalent, penitence, based on the surprising corpus of the Lydian and Phrygian 'Confession Stelai'. In the section 'Epidemics and Purification', I will look at several cases of epidemics, disease that struck not individuals but entire communities, in order to see how these cases were treated in Greek religious thought and practice.

HEALING IN THE TEMPLE: THE EPIDAURIAN *IAMATA* AND RELATED TEXTS

When he described the Asklepios sanctuary of Epidaurus, the traveller Pausanias dedicated some space to an unusual category of inscriptions:

> There were *stelai* standing within the enclosure, more in former times, but six were left in my time. On these, the names of men and women are inscribed who were healed by Asklepios, further the disease from which each suffered, and the way they were healed; they are written in the Doric dialect. (Paus. 2.27.3)

In the excavations of the Epidaurian sanctuary that started in the late nineteenth century, a considerable number of fragments of these stelai

were found; they add up to three more or less fragmentary stelai and an additional fragment. The texts provoked the scorn of von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who saw them as pious fraud, priestly inventions in order to dupe the faithful crowd with miracle stories. The reality is more complex: here and in the other Asclepiea that imitated the Epidaurian custom of erecting such stelai, the texts combine remarkable cases of healing with altogether implausible ones into a record of the god's extraordinary healing powers. Strabo recorded how the Epidaurian sanctuary, remarkable through the 'helping presence' (*epiphaneia*) of Asklepios, was full of sick people seeking healing and of the dedications (*pinakes* . . . *anakeimenoi*) of the healed 'in which the cure is recorded, as in Tricca and Kos' (two other famous shrines of the god) (Strabo 8.6.15). This rich presence of individual dedications must have constituted the core from which the authors of the healing stelai selected the most impressive cases (as some texts suggest, such as the very first story that purports to copy a votive epigram) and blended them with oral stories about the power of the healing god into these large documents, veritable aretalogies of the hero turned god that give a better view into the expectations of the patients of Asklepios than on the exact way the healing was performed. Thus, it seems pointless to try to sort out the imaginary from the real cures. What counts is the insight into the almost limitless faith in the power of the god and the, however limited, glimpse these inscriptions allow into the realities of the Epidaurian and other ancient incubation shrines.

There were some limitations to these expectations, however; people thought that even miracles should respect physical impossibilities, as the following story demonstrates:

> Once a man came as a suppliant to the god who was so blind in one eye that, while he still had the eyelids of that eye, there was nothing within them and they were completely empty. Some of the people in the sanctuary laughed at his simple-mindedness, to think that he could be made to see fully without having anything left of the eye except the socket. When he was sleeping, a dream appeared to him: it appeared to him that he saw the god boiling some drug and then pulling his eyelids apart and pouring it in. When day came, he departed with the sight of both eyes. (No. 9 in the counting of Herzog 1931; trans. after LiDonnici 1995)

Even the other patients and their relatives who were spending some time at the sanctuary could not imagine that the god created a good eye *ex nihilo*, but this was what his pharmaceutical intervention did. The story is also intended to shame those who did not have limitless faith in the god's

abilities, as were other stories in the collection that functioned as an aretalogy of the god, a propagandistic account of divine power. As another story tells, a woman blind in one eye ‘made fun of some healing inscriptions in the sanctuary because they were unbelievable and impossible, the lame and the blind being healed only by seeing a dream’ (no. 4): the god healed her under the condition that she would dedicate ‘a silver pig as a memorial of her ignorance’.

The sanctuaries of Asklepios attracted large crowds of visitors. Patients came with their families and friends, and if the first night had not brought the dream they were hoping for, many stayed longer to try it again. This explains why the healing sanctuary also has an impressive theatre—visitors needed entertainment—while, from a later sanctuary of Asklepios, the one in Aegae in Cilicia, we hear even about philosophers meeting and debating. But not everyone had to wait as long as this; one need not even spend one night there in order to be healed: 'Nicanor, a lame man. When he was sitting down, being awake, a boy snatched his crutch from him and run away. But Nicanor got up, pursued him, and so became well' (no. 16).

Although the text is rather elliptic, the scene must have played itself out not in the *abaton*, the most sacred room in the sanctuary where the sick were lying down to sleep and receive a healing dream, but—as the word *hypar*, ‘being awake’, suggests—during the day in the general sanctuary area. A few other healing events are reported to have happened during the day outside the *abaton*, such as the healing of a mute boy who, during the preliminary sacrifice, spontaneously started to speak in response to a remark of a slave who helped with the firewood (no. 5). More commonly, such an unexpected cure happened through the intervention of the sacred animals of the god, the dogs and snakes that moved freely in the sanctuary. With the exception of a man with an ulcer on a toe who was healed when a sacred snake licked it (no. 17), it was especially children whom the sacred animals of the god took care of during the day—a blind boy who was healed ‘while awake’ (*hypar*) when a sanctuary dog licked his eyes (no. 20), a boy with a tumour in his neck who again was cured *hypar* by a licking dog (no. 26), or a mute girl whom a sacred snake frightened into speaking (no. 44).

Ordinarily, however, a patient who had come to the sanctuary during the day entered the *abaton* in the evening, after the preliminary sacrifices that were offered to several divinities, among them to Mnemosyne for

remembering the dream and to Themis for the legitimacy and correctness of the dreams, according to the most detailed regulations from the Pergamene Asclepieum (*IPerg* VIII: 1 161 A 9–11). In the archaeological record of most Asklepios sanctuaries, the *abaton* is recognizable as a special stoa-like building; the healing sanctuary of Amphiaraos in Oropos even had two sleeping halls, one for each gender. An Epidaurian story, in which, at night, a curious man climbed a tree to peep into the *abaton* shows that at least there it had walls that left some open space or windows higher up (no. 11); the god punished this transgression by making the man fall from the tree and impale his eyes on a bush, but healed him after his sincere repentance. If the first night did not bring a helpful dream, one either went home (nos 25 and 33, both with a happy ending) or stayed for more nights, as was regularly done much later in Christian incubation sites: the man whose ulcerous toe a snake licked had previously been carried out of the *abaton* after a fruitless night and put into a seat in the sanctuary where the snake found him (no. 17).

Muteness, blindness, and other ailments of the eyes recur often in these texts; these are the health problems of which regular doctors despaired. The same is true for the several cases of lameness or paralysis and of problems of female fertility; as personal names such as Aesopodoros or Isidoros (‘Gift of [the local river god] Aesopos, or of Isis’) show, families almost routinely asked the gods for help with fertility problems and ascribed the ensuing pregnancy and birth to divine intervention. In the healing sanctuary, divine intervention happened in a dream, and it took many forms (on divine intervention, see also, in this volume, Platt, Chapter 33). Sometimes it was a simple exchange of words in which the god promises healing; in at least one such case, the patient suffered because she had not asked the right question: a childless woman asked for a pregnancy but not also for birth, and ended up with a pregnancy of three years (no. 2). In other cases, the dream is more graphic, as in another case of a childless woman who dreamt of having intercourse with a sacred snake (no. 42, see also no. 39), or of a man with a stone in his penis that he ejaculated when he dreamed of intercourse with a beautiful boy (no. 14). More often, however, the god intervenes as a doctor. To a blind man, ‘it appeared that the god came towards him and drew open his eyes with his fingers, and that he saw the trees in the sanctuary’ (no. 18); to someone suffering from a spear wound below his eye, ‘it appeared that the god

ground up an herb and poured it into his eye, and he became well' (no. 40); to a man with leeches in his body, 'it appeared that the god cut open his chest with a knife, took out the leeches, gave them into his hands, and sewed his breast together'.

These two types of intervention by the divine doctor—surgical in a wide sense, with and without the surgical knife, and pharmaceutical—are rather common, and they recur in the *iamata* from other sanctuaries, Lebena on Crete, Rome, or Pergamum (Guarducci 1978: 143–66; Girone 1998). Unlike the rather jejune Epidaurian reports, both those from Lebena and from Rome are much more detailed in their information. In Rome,

> to Lucius who suffered from pleurisy and was given up by everybody, the god revealed that he should go and take ashes from the altar, mix them with wine and apply this to his side. (*IG* XIV 966, second century CE; trans. after Edelstein and Edelstein 1945, I, 250, no. 438)

In Crete, a man who, for two years, was plagued by a cough tells us:

> He gave me rocket (*eruca sativa*) to eat on an empty stomach, then pepper flavoured Italian wine to drink, then fine meal (*amylon*) with hot water, then powder from the sacred ashes and sacred water, then an egg and pine-resin, then moist pitch, then iris (?) with honey, then a quince and euphorbia to be cooked together, with the juice to be drunk and the fruit to be eaten, then a fig with holy ashes from the altar to be eaten. (*Inscr. Cret.* I xvii, no. 17, first century BCE; trans. after Edelstein and Edelstein 1945, I, 252, no. 439)

Both reports agree in the high value they ascribe to ashes from the god's altar, in Crete together with water presumably from the spring that was almost omnipresent in sanctuaries of Asklepios—a ritual remedy that has no equivalent among what the doctors prescribe. The Cretan dreamer, however, supplements this ritual remedy with a specific diet whose ingredients were widely used by doctors as well, some of them, such as wine, eggs, or honey with many medical applications, other specifically in prescriptions against cough, such as rocket (Pliny, *Nat*. 20.125), the Italian wine (ibid. 23), the resin, or the moist pitch that was used against an inveterate cough dissolved in cooked leek juice (see (Alexander) *Therapeutica* 2.18–183). Thus, Asklepios' dream cures cannot always be isolated from the cures doctors prescribed to their patients. Some dreamers must have had some knowledge themselves that fed into their dream prescriptions: doctors were less common than today, and householders had their own prescriptions for many ailments—when Pliny rejects the popular use of *amylum*, fine meal, for throat problems as

useless, he most likely argues against such household prescriptions. The orator Aelius Aristides of Smyrna, perhaps the most famous patient of Asklepios in Pergamum, recalls several helpful dream prescriptions that sometimes surprised his own doctors; he used to review them in the morning with the priests of Asklepios. The Cretan dreamer might have done the same, and the local priests were certainly able to discretely influence the final form the prescriptions took.

All this shows that the god whose career had started as a healing hero killed by Zeus when he attempted to resurrect the dead, was the supreme professional, much better even than his sons, who dramatically botched up a case (no. 23). But cures by surgery or prescriptions far from dominate the Epidaurian *iamata*; the range of narration was not even entirely confined to healing. The simple belief of a slave boy that the god could make the broken cup of his master whole again had this very result as soon as he entered the sanctuary with the sherds of the cup (no. 10); a dream in the *abaton* led a father to the place where his son got stuck under a rock during a swim (no. 24) or helped a widow find the treasure her husband had buried before his death (no. 46). These stories express the confidence that the god—called, in later centuries, Soter, 'Saviour', to the dismay of Christian theologians—could help not just in a medical crisis but with other personal problems as well; in a diachronic perspective, they also reflect the character of Asklepios as son of Apollo, who was an oracular god as much as he was an healer and purifier (Graf 2009). It is also worthwhile recalling that Apollo was as much the lord of the Epidaurian shrine as was his son: official inscriptions regularly name both, with Apollo always in the first place (e.g. *IG* IV^2, 1 57 or 121). The shrine of Apollo Maleatas on the side of the Kynortion hill that overlooks the sanctuary might go back to the Bronze Age and is much older than the sanctuary of Asklepios, whose foundation does not antedate the (late) sixth century BCE, but which started an astonishing series of incubation shrines of Asklepios in the entire Mediterranean world.

TRANSGRESSION AND DISEASE: THE PHRYGIAN 'CONFESSION STELAI'

A very different world opens up in Anatolia, in the mountainous borderland between Lydia and Phrygia. Again, it is inscribed stelai that document it, the so-called ‘Confession Stelai’ that attracted the attention of epigraphers and historians of religion early in the twentieth century, such as Raffaele Pettazzoni, who was interested in the prehistory of a unique Catholic ritual, in the wake of other attempts to historicize and re-evaluate the Christian revelation (Pettazzoni 1936). By now, we know that more than 130 of these texts are dated (some explicitly so) to the first three centuries CE, with the largest number in the second century CE (Petzl 1994; Chaniotis 1995; Belayche 2006). They come from several local sanctuaries, often combine a text with an image, and are far from uniform in their way of information, ranging from very short and allusive texts, where neither crime nor punishment are clearly spelled out, to long and detailed texts. They fall into two groups, one very large, the other small.

The large main group includes personal reactions to a voluntary or involuntary transgression, such as perjury, not fulfilling a vow, actions against ritual purity, theft from a sanctuary, the felling of trees in a grove, the eating of meat before the sacrifice was performed, or the refusal to become a priest or an initiate, that is a crime against a personal divinity. In most cases, this led to punishment such as misfortune, illness, or sudden death. Or rather, in the victim’s own experience or, in the case of death, the experience of the surviving close relatives, a sudden crisis such as illness, loss of fortune, or unexpected death led to the fear or the memory of such a transgression; often, a dream or an oracle gave the information that the victim herself did not have, in other cases, the guilty conscience must have been enough. In order to pacify the divinity, the victim or his/her survivors paid a fine or performed a sacrifice and documented their case (and, with it, the power of the divinity) by inscribing and dedicating the stele in the sanctuary. That is, we deal with an explanation of illness and other misfortunes that is based on the punishing intervention of a divinity; healing, where healing is sought, is the result of a redress that realigns humans and the divine.

In a subgroup of these main texts, the perpetrator, once she was conscious of the crime, asked the divinity how to atone for the transgression; the atonement was usually a monetary fine or an animal sacrifice, together with the obligation to inscribe the stele. In a much smaller second group, the victim of a crime that was difficult or

impossible to prosecute on a purely human level, such as the theft by persons unknown, the spreading of rumours, or the embezzlement of money or goods that the embezzler denied under oath, promised to inscribe a stele to testify to the god's power once the perpetrator was punished and, in case a material value was involved, ceded the stolen or embezzled property to the divinity as an incentive for the god to recover them; this promise was done in a public ritual by 'raising a sceptre' in the sanctuary and was understood to be a form of public curse (Gordon 2004).

This small selection corresponds to the widespread group of ritual texts that were often lumped together with the so-called curse tablets but were convincingly labelled as prayers for justice—texts inscribed on lead, like the curse tablets, that addressed a prayer for help to a divinity with connections to the underworld such as Hermes or Demeter; the praying person, again, was the victim of a crime such as slander or theft by persons unknown, and, again, the stolen goods were ceded entirely or in part to the temple as incentive and reward. In the perspective of the perpetrator, a sudden death, an illness, or a misfortune was due again to divine anger, only this time not provoked by a crime directed at the gods themselves but prosecuted by the gods to help an otherwise a powerless human victim. In the prayers for justice on lead, the perpetrators remain invisible (Versnel 1991), whereas some confession stelai were set up by repentant perpetrators of crimes against their fellow humans (e.g. Petzl 1994: nos 68 and 69).

In a typical case, the confessing man, one Diogenes, told how he prayed to his local Zeus for the health of a sick cow, perhaps the only one he owned; when the cow got better, he forgot or refused to do for the god what he had promised. The god punished his daughter 'in her eyes', but she was later healed when her father appeased the god and set up the confession text (Petzl 1994: no. 45). This is not the only case where a family member suffers the punishment; family solidarity is a given in this society. In another case, perjury of the father is punished, first, by the death of his cow, then of his daughter; in a third, the theft of temple property caused the death of the son and the granddaughter of the woman who committed the crime (Petzl 1994: nos 34 and 37).

The diseases that were thought to have been caused by the punishing deity were few in number. But they were serious ailments that usually defied professional treatment, and in rural Anatolia doctors must have

been rare if not non-existent, while treatment was based on traditional cures only. In the texts, blindness and other afflictions of the eye are most common, together with breast ailments; there is also a somewhat vaguely described disease of the lower body (most probably intestinal problems comparable to those that constantly plague Aelius Aristides), death-like paralysis, madness, and some problems connected with the legs (perhaps gout, that impaired easy movement). The disease is not always spelled out in the text but indicated only in the image of a body part that goes with the text. Among these images, eyes or breasts are most common, others—legs or lower body and thigh—rather rare. The images look exactly like the ex-votos from healing shrines, of which there are many extant examples from the ancient world (Forsén 1996). This is no coincidence: by depicting the afflicted body part, the image always signals the healing power of the divinity, whatever the reason for the illness was thought to be. The aetiology, however, is crucially different: Asklepios and other healing heroes were never viewed as having caused the disease that they healed, whereas the gods of the confession stelai sent disease as a punishment and, like Apollo in the first book of the *Iliad*, healed, so to speak, almost by omission, when they decided to end the punishment because they had received atonement.

The idea that disease is a punishment for a transgression is familiar to us from the Old Testament, and it was widespread in ancient Near Eastern societies (Johnston 2004: 452–64, 496–507). In Greece, as Robert Parker showed, 'the conceptual framework for a religion of confession' is present, but it is rarely actualized (Parker 1983: 254; on the intervention of the angry dead see Johnston 1998, *passim*). It is present in mythology, as the beginning of the *Iliad* shows, where Agamemnon's lack of respect for the priest Chryses is punished by the plague that first kills dogs and donkeys, then the men, not unlike the perjury in one of the Anatolian confessions that first killed the donkey and the ox, then the granddaughter of the perjurer (Petzl 1994: no. 34). Occasionally, historians and orators used the same conception, but they did so for rhetorical effect, because it resonated with some readers or jury members, not because it expressed a normative religious worldview (on religion and rhetoric more generally, see also, in this volume, Willey, Chapter 6). Herodotos reports how the Athenians attributed the suicidal madness of the Spartan king Cleomenes to his violation of the Eleusinian sanctuary, the Argives to that of one of

their sacred groves, others to his bribing of the Pythia, whereas the Spartans themselves gave a natural cause; the historians himself thinks that it was a revenge for his intrigues against his colleague Damaratos (Hdt. 6.83–4). Herodotos also tells that the Lydian king Alyattes fell ill after having accidentally destroyed a Milesian temple of Athena and was healed only after rebuilding it, on the advice of Delphi (1.19–22). In his speech against Kinesias, the orator Lysias ascribes the protracted illness of his opponent to divine vengeance for his unholy lifestyle that expressed itself in his membership of the impious dining-club the Kakodaimoniastai ('Those who live under an evil divinity', a mock-satanical association), whose members all came to a bad end because 'they scoffed at the gods and your traditions' (Lys. fr. 5 Gernet).

On the comic stage, Aristophanes could introduce the heroes as claiming that they punish the criminals ('robbers and petty thieves') with a plethora of illnesses, 'spleen, coughs, dropsy, catarrh, scab, gout, madness, lichens, swellings, ague, fever'; the list blends the trivial and the serious and plays with rather than represents the feelings of a late fifth-century BCE Athenian audience (Ar. F 58 Austin). Although sometimes prone to ascribe an illness of one's neighbour to his transgressive life, no ordinary Greek was willing to confess publicly that his own illness was due to bad behaviour. The confession stelai, with their deadly seriousness, thus appear as the expression of a very different worldview, much closer to the plague prayer of the Hittite king Mursilis—and the background of *Iliad* 1—than to the world mirrored in the *iamata* from Epidaurus and elsewhere.

EPIDEMICS AND PURIFICATION

Illness is not just an individual crisis; epidemics threaten entire cities and need to be addressed somehow (Little 2007). In a demonstration of how much epidemics occupied the Greek imagination, two of the major works of Greek literature open with the description of such a crisis, its inception, impact, and final resolution: Homer's *Iliad* and Sophokles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Sophokles' play confronts us immediately with the effect of the

plague that ravages Thebes, and the reaction of the city, its rites of supplication, and the dispatch of an ambassador to Delphi, from where information comes that one has to find and punish the murderer of the former king—information that is to drive the entire tragedy until Oedipus punishes and removes himself—but it abstains from any ritual resolution. In a very different and much more ritual-focused mood, the beginning of the *Iliad* leads us, step by step, from Agamemnon's arrogant refusal and Chryses' cursing prayer through the effects of the plague unleashed by Apollo and the diagnosis of the seer Kalchas, to the final rituals. They follow a double trajectory. First, Agamemnon has the entire army purified (*apolymainesthai*) and offers 'perfect hecatombs of bulls and sheep' to Apollo (1.312–17). Then, Odysseus sails with a delegation to Chryses, to return his daughter to her father and to sacrifice yet another hecatomb to Apollo. The sacrifice allows Chryses to revoke his curse in a prayer that mirrors his original curse; the Greek envoys fill the rest of the day 'by singing the beautiful paean and dancing (*melpontes*) for the god' (1.447–74).

In both cases, a human transgression lies at the root of the epidemic that punishes not the transgressor but his entire community. But whereas the *Iliad* clearly delineates the mechanism that moves from human to divine action as the true source of the catastrophe, with the result that healing is effected by a combination of restitution to reverse the human violation, and purificatory rituals to calm the angry god, the *Oedipus Tyrannus* is much hazier on the divine mechanism, to the point that Oedipus can understand himself as a victim of Apollo (1329f.) and the chorus, juxtaposing their king's greatness and mistake, vaguely make 'time that sees all' the judge of Oedipus (1213f.); one can understand why Jean Cocteau translated all this into 'une machine infernale'.

When, a few years after the performance of the Sophoklean *Oedipus Tyrannus*, a very deadly epidemic hit Athens, such explanations and attempts at healing are almost absent from our record (Mikalson 1984). Thucydides, who survived the catastrophe although he fell ill, refused to talk about the gods, as he refused to present any other aetiology: 'As to its probable origin or the causes which might or could have produced such a disturbance of nature, every man, whether a physician or not, will give his own opinion.' His aim is to record 'its actual course and the symptoms' so that future generations would be able to recognize it, if it should appear

again. He curtly acknowledges that people took refuge in making ‘supplications in temples, enquiries of oracles, and the like’, but they remained as useless as the human endeavours to stop the pandemic’ (Thuc. 2.47–53; translation after Jowett). In his view of things, divine intervention, either as a cause or as a cure, is unthinkable.

Several centuries later (and almost a millennium after the *Iliad*), a series of oracles demonstrate how Greek cities handled similar catastrophes, whom or what they were blaming, and what rituals they were performing to end the disease. From several cities in the Greek East—Pergamum, Hierapolis, Caesarea Trocetta, Kallipolis, and an unknown Lydian city in the Hermos valley—we have oracles of the Clarian Apollo that he gave in reaction to a request how to deal with an epidemic and that the grateful city, after the resolution of the crises, inscribed on a marble slab and exhibited (Merkelbach and Stauber 1996: nos 2, 4, 8, 9). All these inscriptions are dated to the second century CE, to judge from the letter forms; however, these are uncertain guides for a more precise date. As a consequence, it is not easy to connect them firmly with the major pandemic of the age, the plague that the troops of Lucius Verus brought from Mesopotamia to the West in 165/6 CE, with the possible exception of the oracle for Hierapolis (no. 4) that states that ‘many cities and nations complain about the anger of the gods’ (Marcone 2002).

The text are comparable insofar as, in all five cases, Apollo in Klaros prescribes a ritual reaction to the disease, and, in four of the five cases, one of the ritual measures is the erection of a divine image. The ritual details, however, vary as much as the reason the god reveals for the disaster, and they all show that the oracle respected local cults and characteristics. The oracle for Pergamon (no. 2) refrains from giving any reason and centres on the prescription of rites for the four main divinities of the city, Zeus, Athena, Dionysos, and Asklepios: they should be worshiped by four ephebic choruses, each for one of the gods, and by four sets of sacrifices with the ensuing banquets, each with a specific animal, that, each time, should last for seven days and should be performed by the ephebes and their fathers. The god, thus, is not interested in purification but in healing through creating a feeling of solidarity among the male elite of the city and the four paramount city gods. Disease (‘a terrible illness’ that wears out the people: Thuc. 2.11) is understood as a rupture of

harmony and solidarity between men and gods that the healing rituals have to repair.

Three of the four remaining texts are close both in their structure and in the way they envision both ritual healing and ritual prophylactics. In the oracles for Hierapolis (no. 4), Caesarea Trocetta (no. 8), and Kallipolis (no. 9), the reasons for the plague are uncanny forces from the depth of the earth—Earth (*Gaia*) and the *keres*, the unruly dead, in Hierapolis; subterranean beings whose name is lost in a lacuna in Kallipolis; a graphically described plague demon in Caesarea. In Hierapolis and Kallipolis, a set of sacrifices to different divine recipients is the ritual answer, some of them of black animals that are to be slaughtered and entirely burned in pits in the ground. The reason for the disease is the unprovoked intervention of hostile demonic powers, and it is not the communality of the meal that will pacify them but the wholesale destruction of animal life for their sake. For Caesarea, the god prescribes an entirely different cure:

> Endeavor to prepare a pure drink from seven springs
> that you have to treat with sulphur and then to draw in
> all haste;
> quickly sprinkle the houses with the nymphs that are
> so desirable,
> so that the not yet diseased men that are left over in the
> fields
> will be able to perform enough beautiful sacrifices
> from the
> regrowing harvests. (trans. Fritz Graf)

Although the disease—and presumably a concomitant disease of the fields—has been caused by malevolent superhuman powers, as in the two other cities, the reaction is different: the careful ritual ‘washing’ of the buildings is enough, no additional destruction of animals is required (No. 8 B 7–11). The disease is seen as a defilement that can be washed off. But it does not suffice: the aim of the purification is to allow the country to produce enough so that, in the future, sacrifices can be offered to the gods; we have to assume that, without them, the problems for the city would not end.

In all three cases, however, the god orders an additional measure—to erect the statue of an archer Apollo either in front of the city gates (Hierapolis, Kallipolis) or in the fields (Caesarea). It is prophylactic: the god whose arrows spread the deadly disease in the *Iliad* is also able to shoot the plague demon as soon as he comes close to the city—as the text from Hierapolis has it:

> At every gate put in a precinct of Clarian Phoebus
> the sacred image, excelling with arrows that destroy disease,
> so that he shoots from afar the waterless illness [i.e. fever]. (No. 4.18–20)

One has to assume that these statues were, from now on, worshipped with regular sacrifices: the oracular Apollo of Klaros used the occasion to spread his own cult.

The oracle for the unknown Lydian city is different again. It does not accuse superhuman agency as the reason for the disease, but the activity of a (human) sorcerer, and it prescribes bringing a statue of Artemis with two torches from Ephesos, erecting it in a sanctuary, and instituting nocturnal festivals in honour of Ephesian Artemis, with the singing and dancing of wreathed choruses of girls and boys. The statue, or rather the goddess somehow embodied in it, will destroy the hostile magic:

> she will
> keep away
> the distress and will dissolve the life-killing sorcery of the plague,
> with her fire-bearing torches in nightly flame melting
> the figures of wax,
> the evil signs of the art of a *magos*. (No. 11.6–9)

This is a very different cure, following from a very different aetiology. We have to assume that the god reacted to local rumours that the sudden epidemic was caused by sorcery, but that he did not want to identify the sorcerer (as the locals might have expected from him) and thus give rise to a witch hunt; instead, he ordered the locals to introduce a new festival of Artemis of Ephesos with a nocturnal celebration, and threatened them at

the end with a new outbreak if they did not do so. The rumours fit a widespread pattern, in ancient and other cultures, that ascribed unexplained disease and death to sorcery. Many grave epigrams of young people who died from slow and intractable diseases express the anger at an unknown male or female sorcerer to whom the disease was ascribed (Graf 2007), and the same suspicion haunted the young philosopher Apuleius when his friend and stepson died from a disease (*Apologia* 2.1). Neither was the suspicion of sorcery far away when the young prince Germanicus died of a fever (Tac. *Ann*. 2.69), or when the famous orator Libanios suffered from headaches and other career-threatening problems (*Or*. 1.24). In both cases, investigation by friends found magical paraphernalia hidden in the walls and floors of the respective dwellings: curse tablets and remains of human sacrifices in Germanicus' case, a dried-out and mutilated chameleon in Libanios', and both times the suspected agents were envious colleagues and rivals.

Unlike the epidemics in the *Iliad* and the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the plagues addressed in these oracles are not seen as having human transgression as their reason; the anger of the gods, the attacks of malevolent superhuman beings, and even the attack by a human sorcerer were not provoked but hit an entirely innocent community. This corresponds to the absence of any confession ritual in individual diseases in Greece, despite the existence of the relative conceptual framework. It also corresponds to the ambivalence in the Sophoklean Oedipus, who prefers to accuse Apollo even when punishing himself, and to the observation that, even in the case of an unexpected early death, accusations of witchcraft—that is, intentional human malice—were extremely rare in the Greco-Roman world when compared to other cultures. It was preferable to ascribe misfortune and death to the caprice of an unpredictable fortune and of hostile powers, and to deal with the consequences accordingly.

CONCLUSION

Three different complexes of epigraphical texts, from different epochs and places, open windows on how differently religious thought and action

could react to illness. Incubation in a sanctuary of Asklepios was not conditioned on a religious aetiology of illness, it supplemented the cures by doctors and household medications that did not lead to an improvement or healing; the community of the suffering, with the double reassurance of the stability of ritual actions surrounding the night in the *abaton* and the many and often miraculous successes attested by the *pinakes* and collections of *iamata* in the sanctuary, must have contributed as much psychological and even psychosomatic help as the dreams that often ended up prescribing medications, diets, or even changes of life style. In a sense, these visits were the closest ancient society came to contemporary holistic medicine. The Phrygio-Lydian 'Confession Stelai', on the other hand, attest to a cosmology in which powerful gods oversaw human behaviour and were ready to punish transgression—either because they were angered directly, or because a victim of another's misdeed asked them—with misfortune, death, or illness, but were as ready to make the disease cease once atonement had been made. Although this cosmology fits ancient Near Eastern paradigms, Greek society knew it as well, as the *Iliad* showed, but was not willing to act it out publicly as a way to cure individual cases of illness. Nor was it applied to epidemics, despite the mythical antecedents. The Clarian oracles demonstrate how one could see the action of evil or angry powers at the root of an epidemic, from gods to angry dead, but they also show how the reaction took locally defined forms that varied greatly, and, uniquely, how prophylactic measures again were based on ritual action, this time centred on a statue of Apollo Apotropaios.

Suggested Reading

Besides the books by E. J. and L. Edelstein (1945) and by H. von Ehrenheim (2011), see, on the expansion of the cult of Asklepios in Classical Greece, Wickkiser 2008. On the impact of disease and epidemics: Lloyd 2003. A Near Eastern perspective can be found in Avalos 1995. For a detailed idea of what a minor healing shrine looked like and how it functioned, see Vikela 1994. The essays in Hinnels and Porter 1999 offer an interesting, although selective, transcultural perspective; those in Marino, Molè, and Prinzone 2006 deal with late antiquity (given the

cultural unity of the late Imperial period, they are often helpful for the Greek East, despite their main focus on the Roman West).

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PART VIII

WHEN?

CHAPTER 35

FROM BIRTH TO DEATH: LIFE-CHANGE RITUALS

SARAH HITCH

INTRODUCTION

ALL significant aspects of ancient Greek society were marked by rituals, a term used to describe repetitive actions, thought by the actors to have meaning beyond practical function. In ancient Greece, most rituals attempt to communicate between mortals and divinities. Failure to perform the rituals or to perform them correctly according to local customs was thought to endanger the group as a whole; conversely, groups found rituals to be powerful expressions of harmony and prosperity through the divine beneficence they were thought to symbolize and guarantee. In most contexts, the rituals were not thought to permanently alter the status of the participants, but rather to reaffirm their individual or collective identity through participation (e.g. Burkert 1985: 55; Parker 2011: 218, citing Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 157).

It is possible to categorize a different sort of ritual as relating to 'life change', because the ritual marks or reflects a change in the status of the

participant. Since the development of the anthropological study of religion in the late nineteenth century, the most frequently discussed life-change rituals are those marking a transition from childhood to sexual maturity and, consequently, availability for the gender roles of male citizen and his wife that formed the fabric of ancient Greek societies (e.g. Sourvinou-Inwood 1988: 78). As these rituals prepared the individual to assume his or her role within their community, they varied quite dramatically from city to city in extent and details. As with many other aspects of Greek religion, we must piece together information from different sources and be wary of the convenience of categorizations. Greeks did not group life-change rituals together, as far as we can tell, since they had no word corresponding to 'ritual' or even 'religion', much less the concepts drawn from anthropology that predominate in interpretations today, particularly the concept term 'initiation' for rituals marking lifecycle changes (Graf 2003: 9).

Adolescence, in most Greek cities, was the period between the onset of puberty and the age of marriage, usually 15 for girls and 20 for boys. The vulnerability of the young person during this time is emphasized in numerous Greek myths: the 'girl's tragedy' type and its male equivalent of the hero's quest (e.g. Dowden 1989). Iphigenia, Persephone, and Theseus are often taken as paradigmatic of these patterns, which have been interpreted in twentieth-century scholarship as mapping 'rites of passage', a phrase used universally in the social sciences since the publication of *Les rites de passage* (*Rites of Passage*) by the Belgian ethnologist Arnold van Gennep.

Originally published in Paris in 1909, *Rites of Passage* was not widely recognized until publication in English in 1960, since which time it has become one of the most influential texts in anthropology. Henri Jeanmaire, among others in the early twentieth century, picked up this ethnological thread in his comparison of Spartan rites and the myth of Theseus with African tribal initiation practices (1939). However, it was not until the reinterpretation of the work of van Gennep by the Italian scholar Angelo Brelich in his unfinished *Paides e Parthenoi* (*Children and Unmarried Girls*, 1969) that the phrase 'rites of passage' and the concept of initiation was significantly applied to ancient Greek societies.

Van Gennep found a tripartite structure of rites of separation, liminality, and reintegration underwriting ritual procedures 'to ensure a change in

condition or passage from one magico-religious or secular group to another' (1960: 11). Certain distinctive outward signs, such as special clothing, language, and diet, match physical deprivation (cold, starvation, physical and sexual abuse) and social exclusion or segregation as inversions of normative practice under the close supervision of members of the community (e.g. Brelich 1969: 31–44).

Around the same time, the British anthropologist Victor Turner expanded van Gennep's second transitory stage with a sophisticated interpretation of 'liminality' as a time for transgression and inversion that identifies and affirms the social identity achieved in the final stage of reintegration (Turner 1967). The period of withdrawal and status of liminality in many cultures is signified as a type of 'death', while the integration is a rebirth (e.g. Lincoln 1981). All of these interpretations emphasize the affirmation of the norm through a limited engagement with the opposite: trickery foreshadows obedience to law; hyper-sexuality, celibacy, or homosexuality anticipate a lifetime of marriage and procreation; living in the wild prepares for active participation in an ordered community. The intricacies of scholarly interpretations of Greek adolescent rituals as 'initiations' depend mostly on the terminology used and its history in anthropology to refer to compulsory procedures for young men to become full adult members of their communities, which do not seem to have been the case for any Greek cities except Sparta and the larger cities in Crete (e.g. Dodd and Faraone 2003).

Within the working typology of life-change rituals, another distinction can be drawn between rituals performed within family groups and age-specific rituals, also divisional by gender, in which adolescent boys or girls are segregated from their families for a period of time, often living together in groups separated from the community. Rituals marking birth, marriage, and death belong to the former category and will be discussed first, focusing mostly on evidence from Classical Athens, the only context for which we have any significant evidence for all of these stages. An overview of birth, marriage, and death rituals as a group allows for a consideration of the role of women as mothers in ancient Greek cities, their primary identity, which determined both the shape of Athenian marriage ceremonies and the prominent role of women in death rituals.

Another section of this chapter, 'Age Group Rituals', will look at adolescent group activities, with a particular focus on the evidence for

boys' activities in Crete and Sparta and girls' at Brauron. Adolescent rites have long contributed to the 'polis religion' model for the interpretation of Greek religion, in which the community identity and bonds are considered to structure the perception and performance of all aspects of Greek religion (e.g. Vidal-Naquet 1983; revisions suggested by Polinskaya 2003). However, such interpretations depend on a relatively static political framework, while different Greek cities cannot reasonably be compared in such a way.

Alternatively, a 'thick interpretation' of the similarities in rituals marking birth, marriage, and death within households, as opposed to the collective rites of passage in public spaces at Brauron, Crete, and Sparta, draws a distinction between those rituals responding to uncontrollable life changes and those socially constructed according to a community's self-perception of its members (e.g. Parker 1983). Some attempts have been made to read the Greek childbirth, marriage, and death rites as 'initiation rituals' in terms of the tripartite pattern of withdrawal–liminality–return (e.g. Lincoln 1981; Parker 1983: 59 ff.).

Although Persephone's part-time marriage to Hades, the god of the dead, is a configuration of the death/rebirth transformation identified by Victor Turner and others in tribal initiation procedures all over the world (e.g. Turner 1967: 96), the status of the groom is not clearly changed by marriage, while the status of Athenian women is changed by having children, not marriage, which is explicitly conceived of as the institutionalized means of begetting citizens (see evidence in Ferrari 2003). Greek marriage rituals cannot be seen as 'initiatory', even if their divine model in Persephone can, because Greek women can marry more than once, at any age past puberty, and legally continue to be under the authority of their fathers even after marriage (Ferrari 2003; *contra* Lincoln 1981; Redfield 1982). Childbirth and death rituals effect a permanent transition in the introduction of new members of the household and the departure of the dead, but in these cases a perception of 'liminality' is not clearly marked unless the concept of pollution during childbirth and for those in contact with the corpse is considered; however, the duration of the pollution beyond the time of the ritual procedures of naming and burial complicates this: possibly as long as forty days for birth and thirty days for death in some cities.

LIFE RITUALS FOR THE FAMILY

Although the naming and introductory rites for infants are routine in many Greek cities, the process of pregnancy and childbirth was not regularly marked by rituals in any of our sources, but rather by concepts of pollution that attend physiological changes, particularly those of women. The pollution thought to attend female biological processes and the prominence of women in death rituals may partially reflect high infant mortality and the impacts of this on communities (e.g. Golden 2004: 157). Like many aspects of the Greek *oikos*, lifecycle rituals are predominately performed by, for, and among women. Their husbands and male relatives were incorporated into the more public side of these rituals (usually involving movement in and out of the house) in which the event was commemorated by the community. In contrast to the public ceremonies that tend to conclude initiation rituals, birth, marriage, and, to some extent, death rituals take place within the household. As sources of pollution, birth, marriage, and death are the activities universally excluded from Greek sanctuaries, spaces seen to be crucial for rituals marking the transformation of adolescents to adults in their roles as citizens (Boedeker 2008: 240).

Birth

Pregnant women, in the course of making their transitions to new life stages are often perceived as vulnerable, an anxiety marked in childbirth through notions of pollution and the 'logic of inversion' in which the momentous importance of childbirth is reflected in the creation of a sort of artificial barrenness around the process of natural fertility. Plato reports that only post-menopausal women can act as midwives, appropriate to the service of the virgin goddess Artemis thought to watch over young women and children (Pl. *Tht*. 149c; Parker 1983: 49; cf. *Hymn Hom. Dem.* 102–3). Although pregnant women were encouraged to visit the sanctuaries of deities presiding over childbirth, they were excluded from places

associated with divine births (Arist. *Pol*. 1335b12–14; Thuc. 3.104; Callim. *Hymn* 1.12).

Eileithyia, a goddess attested from the Mycenaean period, was thought to bring on labour (e.g. *Hymn Hom. Ap*. 97). The baby's first bath is a significant moment (e.g. Callim. *Hymn* 1.10–23), the first of a series of associations of water with growth in Greek practice. Rivers are often worshipped as *kourotrophos*, 'child-nurturing' deities, and are given dedications of hair by adolescents (e.g. Hom. *Il*. 23.146; Hes. *Theog*. 346–8). The act of childbirth is often symbolized through the 'loosening' of a woman's girdle, also a symbol of defloration, an indication of the Greek equivalence of female sexuality with reproduction. Girls put on girdles at the onset of puberty: the act of removal can denote the first sexual experience as well as childbirth (cf. Hom. *Od*. 11.245; Callim. *Hymn*. 1.23). A psychoanalytic interpretation puts the significance on acts of binding and loosening as symbolic of the desire of a male-dominated society to manage the uncontrollable aspects of natural reproduction and female physiology (e.g. King 1983). An anthropological view finds aspects of 'sympathetic' or 'homeopathic' magic in the 'loosening' of the girdle for childbirth, one of several protective rites performed. Similar are the use of amulets in the shape of a uterus, often inscribed with spells, and incantations spoken by the midwife. All of these indicate the perceived vulnerability of women in childbirth to demons (cf. Pl. *Tht*.149cd; Ar. *Thesm*. 502–16; e.g. Ellis-Hansen 2004).

Adolescence

An overarching theme of all lifecycle rituals is the symbolic significance of clothing as an outward symbol of the life change. In the case of birth and marriage, clothing worn by women is often dedicated to the goddesses thought to protect such transitions. The inscribed inventories of dedications at the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron during the fourth century BCE record numerous items of clothing, either in thanks for a successful birth or in memory of women who died in childbirth (*IG* II^2 1514; Demand 1994: 88–91). A striking fourth-century plaque shows the presentation of a newborn baby to the goddess before a backdrop of clothing hanging on the wall (Lamia, Archaeological Museum inv. AE

1041, Neils 2003: 145). Similar are changes in hairstyles. While the maturation of girls in most Greek cities fell under the auspices of Artemis, boys were under the guardianship of several different gods, including Dionysos, Hermes, Herakles, and Apollo; the latter is often imagined as the idealized *kouros* 'youth' with unshorn locks (e.g. Ap. Rhod. 2.707–9). In many cities, the age of boys was expressed through their hairstyle: they often wore their hair, or a special lock, long until their successful completion of the passage to adulthood, when the hair was ritually cut and dedicated to the gods by their parents (see Leitao 2003).

Death in childbirth was thought to be caused by Artemis; a frequent *topos* in myth depicts her as the destroyer of unmarried girls as well, such as Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon (e.g. Aesch. *Ag*. 122–247). This range of positive and negative aspects of Artemis as both protector and killer of women can be interpreted as a reflection of the ambivalence of female reproduction in Greek thought. For men, blood is fatal, but women's blood is both creative and fatal: women bleed during menstruation, defloration, and childbirth, but may also bleed, like all human beings, in death. In the same way, the goddess thought to protect young women is also the one thought to demand or bring about their premature deaths. The association of this virgin goddess with wild animals and hunting reflects the uncontrollable side of women's physiology, making her an apt guardian or prosecutor of these processes, while her eternal virginity reflects the social desire for control over female sexual maturation (e.g. King 1983; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988).

Marriage and Death

This complex association of life and death in women's bodies, expressed in the dual function of Artemis as guardian and destroyer of babies and girls, can be extended to posit an association between marriage and death rituals. In Athens, about which we are best informed, the transfer of a woman from the house of her father to that of her husband bears many procedural similarities to the funerary rituals. The links between rituals for these two stages in the lifecycle will be the focus of a short summary of practices in Classical Athens.

For both weddings and funerals, the person (bride or deceased) was washed and dressed by women before being taken out of the house in darkness in a procession with songs and torches: the *ekdosis* 'giving out' for marriage and *ekphora* 'carrying out' in funerals. In both contexts, locks of hair were dedicated, a symbolic severance of childhood for the bride, while in funerals, it was a gift of life to be buried with the deceased. On the night before the wedding the bride made other dedications, such as toys and clothes, to Artemis, Hera, or Aphrodite, accompanied by sacrifices (*proteleia*) and feasting (e.g. the epigram of Timareta, *Anth. Pal*. 6.280) before a ritual bath on the following day (Eur. *Phoen*. 343–8). The centrepiece of the marriage seems to have been the unveiling of the bride (*anakalupteria*) by her attendant in the presence of her groom, followed by feasting and the presentation of gifts, although the exact details are unclear (cf. Pherec. fr. 68; Ferrari 2002: 187–9). The couple was led in a nocturnal procession by cart to the groom's house, where they would feast and gifts would be presented on the third day (*epaulia*), concluding the ceremony. When the couple reached the groom's house, the bride was taken to the hearth and showered with fruit, one of several rites performed during weddings meant to endow the couple with fertility (see Redfield 1982). In Sparta, the marriage ceremony enacted a mock abduction of the bride, dressed in boy's clothing and with cropped hair, from her parents' home; according to the second-century CE writer Plutarch, for a long period of time the couple only met at night in a darkened room (*Lyc*. 15.3–4).

In Athens, both funerals and marriages were overseen by the *gynaikonomoi*, the 'women's police' (cf. Men. fr. 272 Kock; Plut. *Sol*. 21.5). Although some aspects of the Athenian wedding were overseen by legislation, the funeral procedure was very closely controlled by the local government in a series of laws attributed to Solon ((Dem.) 43; Plut. *Sol*. 21; Humphreys 1993: 85 ff.). The corpse was considered to pollute the house and those who came into contact with it; like birth, death is a natural process outside of human control that results in a series of procedures to alleviate the perceived disruption of these momentous, uncontrollable events (Parker 1983: 63). Women played special roles relevant to this notion of pollution: the female family members of the deceased performed the ritual bath and dressing of the corpse and performed laments during the procession, an aspect that was closely regulated by the Solonian laws.

Funerary processions took place before sunrise on the day following the *prothesis*, 'setting out', an indoor display of the bathed and dressed corpse by family, and context for rituals of mourning. The burial, either cremation or inhumation depending on the time period and local custom, was accompanied by sacrifices and deposition of gifts with the remains of the deceased. Feasting concluded the ceremony on the day of burial, and three subsequent feasts were held on the third, ninth, and thirtieth days after burial, the last marking the end of the mourning period (Isae. 2.37, 8.39; Burkert 1985: 194).

The procedural similarities between weddings and funerals are reinforced by the frequent mythical association of the death of unmarried girls with their unfulfilled marriage potential, most powerfully expressed in myths of the 'girl's tragedy', as, for example, Antigone's description of her tomb as a bridal chamber (Soph. *Ant*. 891). This linking of the maiden's death with marriage has been explained as an extension of the patriarchal urge, expressed in the social convention of marriage, to control the uncontrollable physical changes of girls' bodies during adolescence (e.g. Dowden 1989). 'A transition effected by nature (death) is enclosed by the imagination within a similar transition effected by culture (marriage)' (Seaford 1987: 106).

While the social implications for Athenian brides seem restrictive to modern audiences, the association between marriage and death in the Greek perspective may be better seen as a meditation on the finality of death and its untimeliness in the case of young people. Many of the maidens who die before marriage in myth become 'heroines', figures once mortal but who obtain divine powers through their deaths and are worshipped as gods protective of the locality in which they are buried. The violation of the lifecycle in their untimely death transfers their reproductive life-giving powers to the afterlife (Ferrari 2003: 36). If the funerary echoes on the occasion of weddings reflect a sense of loss, it is the loss of power to attract suitors: the portrayal of young men seeking and wooing maidens in poetry suggests a limited time in which women have the upper hand (Redfield 1982).

AGE GROUP RITUALS

Adolescents participated in many types of rituals, which may be best discussed in terms of a sliding scale of ritualization. At the least intense end of the scale, we may put the larger, inclusive ritual activities for groups of boys and girls in musical and, for boys, athletic contests at festivals, which reflect different stages in life by grouping participants according to gender and age (Calame 2001: 27–8). In the middle of the spectrum are more specialized roles for individuals on these occasions, such as the *kanephoros* 'sacrificial basket carrier' in the Panathenaia. However, such roles are not usually discussed as life-change rituals since the girl or boy is not seen to undergo a change in social status as a consequence of such activity; rather, their role reflects their current social status.

At the more intense end of the spectrum are the attested 'initiation' rituals, those thought to reflect or even enable a change in status from childhood to adulthood. As the scope of this chapter concerns rituals marking changes in the lifecycle, initiation into mystery cults such as the Eleusinian mysteries will not be covered (see, in this volume, Edmonds, Chapter 37). These initiations share many characteristics with the lifecycle rituals under discussion here, such as the 'tripartite structure', but are not restricted in age or gender. Specific ages and exclusion by gender are, however, defining criteria of rites of passage, or 'tribal initiation' as these rituals are sometimes called in anthropology, to distinguish them from those rites marking elective entry into a special group.

Becoming Men: Crete and Sparta

Cretan and Spartan cities were governed by a ruling class of men, *hetairoi* 'companions' in Crete and *homoioi* 'same ones' in Sparta, who dined in common halls, *andreion* 'the men's place' in Crete, and *sussitia* 'common dining' in Sparta. The men were incorporated into the ruling class via their dining rights through a progressed series of rituals required and regulated by law. The passage into adulthood for Greek boys in all cities depended on their readiness to serve as citizens in the military and organized political groups. In this regard, their transition to adulthood was managed

and, in some cases, required by their local government, in which participation was the goal of such transitional ritual procedures. The Cretan and Spartan systems bear many similarities in procedure and terminology, leading to speculation in antiquity about a shared Cretan origin, transmitted by either Spartan colonists or the legendary Spartan lawgiver Lykourgos (e.g. Strabo *Geog*. 10. 4.17; Plut. *Lyc*. 4).

In terms of the ritualized transitions (aside from the larger process of acquisition of full citizen rights and education), in both Crete and Sparta systematic changes in clothing, diet, habitat, and sexuality signalled the boy's progress towards adulthood. According to the account of Cretan customs summarized by Ephoros, a fourth-century historiographer, preserved in the *Geography* of Strabo, the younger boys wore shabby clothes, ate sitting on the ground, and served the adults in the common dining halls; older boys were grouped into *agelai* 'herds', led by the father of the head boy, who supervised hunting, running races, and mock warfare, punishing those who disobeyed. The *agelai* boys were fed at public expense and apparently required to marry at the same time, although not to share a household until the girl was older (Strabo *Geog*. 10.4.20). Ephoros concludes his description of the *agelai* with details of the 'peculiar custom' of mock abductions:

> After giving the boy presents, the abductor takes him away to any place in the country he wishes; and those who were present in the abduction follow after them, and after feasting and hunting with them for two months (for it is not permitted to detain the boy for a longer time), they return to the city. Now the boy sacrifices the ox to Zeus and feasts those who returned with him; and then he makes known the facts about his intimacy with his lover . . . the law allowing him this privilege in order that, if any force was applied to him at the time of the abduction, he might be able at this feast to avenge himself and be rid of the lover. But the *parastathentes* 'standing by' (for thus they call those who have been abducted) receive honours; for in both the dances and the races they have the positions of highest honour, and are allowed to dress in better clothes than the rest, that is, in the habit given them by their lovers; . . . even after they have grown to manhood, they wear a distinctive dress, which is intended to make known the fact that each wearer has become famous (*kleinos*). (Strabo *Geog*. 10.4.21, trans. Jones)

In this procedure, communal segregation, servitude, and deprivation preceded tests of physical endurance, before the best boys were selected for sexual partnership with older men, which was cast as a form of rape. All of these features are inversions of the normative roles of citizens, husbands, and protectors—the roles that were, in fact, the end result of such trials. The enforced period of absence and special clothing that marks

the reintegration of the individual and his consequent elevation in status is a typical feature of tribal initiation rituals, as observed by anthropologists. However, the Cretan practice is not well attested, and the fact that Strabo's source describes it at such length further points to the unusual nature of such customs. Institutionalized homosexuality of such a nature can be interpreted from an ecological perspective, as opposed to a sociological pattern, as a form of birth control, a point also made by Aristotle, a contemporary of Ephoros, with reference to Cretan homosexuality (Arist. *Pol*. 1272a.25; Percy 1996: 60).

Becoming Men: Sparta

A similar pattern is attested for the educational system of Sparta, although ancient authors connect parts of the Spartan process explicitly with rituals in honour of Artemis, a principle deity in life-change rituals for men and women. According to the fourth-century Athenian historian Xenophon, the legendary lawgiver Lykourgos instituted a system in which boys, from the age of about 7, were classed as *paides* 'children' and removed from their families to live together in groups also known as *agelai*. They were under the supervision of a *paidonomos* 'children's guardian', supported by older boys armed with whips to encourage 'modesty (*aidos)* and obedience (*peitho)*' (Xen. *Lac*. 2.2–3). They wore only one cloak, no shoes, and slept in groups on reeds on the ground. He reports that the boys were supplied with barely enough food to survive so as to encourage theft as a pedagogical tool in the creation of better adult warriors (cf. Plut. *Lyc*. 17.4). Boys caught in the act were whipped, which was intended to make them more resourceful, a practice Xenophon and Plutarch connect with ritual whipping in the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia (Xen. *Lac*. 2.3–9; Plut. *Lyc*.18.1).

The ancient accounts of this whipping vary: Xenophon reports that boys attempting to steal cheeses dedicated to Orthia are beaten by other boys with whips, while Pausanias describes ritual whipping as a reform by Lykourgos of original human sacrifices (Paus. 3.17.10). Plutarch credits the rite to a Lydian attempt to disrupt a sacrifice, which was defended by Spartans, who commemorate the moment with annual whipping and a 'Lydian procession' (Plut. *Arist*. 17.10). The Lydian procession may refer

to some kind of costume—possibly girls' clothing (Graf 1985: 88–9). A further link to the initiation paradigm may be the numerous fragments of life-size terracotta masks found in the sanctuary, dating from the sixth century. This type of dedication is almost entirely unique to this sanctuary, and suggests a ritual disguise of a type attested for other gender-specific rituals marking changes in the lifecycle.

In all three anecdotes, adolescent boys are encouraged or required to steal and receive punishment. Similar to the Cretan practice, they break normative social practice and are treated as if outsiders or representatives of hostile groups, before becoming adult citizens entrusted to protect the community. This structure is typical of the 'initiation' paradigm. The variations in *testimonia* indicate that a core ritual procedure involving flogging developed over a long period of time. Imperial Greek and Roman sources emphasize the violence of the beatings, even to the point of death (e.g. Cic. *Tusc*. 2.14, 34; Lucian *Anach*. 38–9; see Hughes 1991: 80). This increased interest in the violence of the ritual probably reflects contemporary attitudes towards public violence and spectacle, and such a bias must be taken into account in our attempts to reconstruct the ritual. All rituals are dynamic, but this kind of change over time is an aspect of life-change rituals that is particularly hard to reconstruct due to the overall paucity of evidence; nonetheless, it should not be underestimated.

The sexual relationship promoted in the Cretan adolescent rituals is not as prominent in Sparta: older boys were distinguished from younger ones through a relationship with an adult man, possibly sexual, whom they served in the men's mess hall (*phiditia*) and who oversaw their progress through the stages of education until completion of the *agoge* around the age of 30. The emphasis seems to have been squarely on physical endurance testing in Sparta, in keeping with the goal of the Spartan system to produce a ruling warrior class. In one of the final stages, young men underwent the *krupteia* (from *kruptein* 'to hide'), which Plato describes as a period of time in which youths were sent to live in the wilderness and compelled to stay hidden (Pl. *Leg*. 633b–c). Plutarch adds that a select group of these men were charged with attacking and killing helots, an enslaved population (Plut. *Lyc*. 28.1–2).

The removal of boys from their families, the institutionalized recognition of their status as 'in-between' childhood and adulthood through staged endurance and obedience testing, the use of distinctive

clothing, diet, and habitat, coupled with some highly stylized forms of concealment before reintegration, link the Cretan and Spartan adolescent educational systems with many practices of tribal initiation worldwide. Such patterns may be ubiquitous because of their affirmative value in the integration of new members of communities. The sanctioned experience of activities normally subject to criticism or punishment may provide a release of tension or a form of adult 'play' that enables the normative values of the community to be seen, and therefore appreciated, more clearly (e.g. Babcock 1978). The opportunity to view social structure, gender roles, sexuality, and companionship from an experimental perspective facilitates integration upon return to it (Turner 1967: 106ff.).

Becoming Men: Athens

One of the most persuasive accounts of such a 'logic of inversion' for Classical Greece was Pierre Vidal-Naquet's study of the equivalent system in Athens, the *ephebeia*, a two-year tour of duty for young men on the outskirts of Attica, for which they probably wore a special uniform (Arist. *Ath. Pol*. 42.3; Lycurg. *Leoc*. 76; Philostr. *VS* 2.550). Vidal-Naquet linked the *ephebeia* with an aetiology for the Apatouria festival in which boys were enrolled in their father's *phratry*: according to the legend, a certain Athenian, Melanthos ('black man'), volunteers to a single combat against Boiotian King Xanthos ('fair man'), and tricks him into looking behind, thereby allowing Melanthos to kill him and then take over the kingship of Athens (*FGrH* 323a F23).

The possible significance of such an aetiology for the Apatouria as paradigmatic for Athenian citizens can be seen in the use of this occasion for a staged recognition of the maturation of boys. On the third day of the festival, known as Koureotis (a word derived from *kouros* 'young man'), three different sacrifices signified the three stages of life for men. The *meion* was offered by fathers of sons born during the year; the *koureion* by those enrolling their sons into the *phratry*; and the *gamelia* by men recently married (Andoc. 1.125–6; Isae. 3.76–9, 8.18–19; *IG* II^2 1237.118; Lambert 1993). Enrolment in the *phratry* was the first step towards becoming an ephebe.

For Vidal-Naquet, the inversion of normal hoplite warfare in the single combat and trickery of Melanthos presented a mythical paradigm for affirmation through inversion which mirrored the process of enforced absence and alterity in the *ephebeia* service, which preceded the incorporation of these young men into society as citizens (Vidal-Naquet 1986; cf. Brelich 1961: 51–9; *contra* Lambert 1993: 149). However, increasingly, the affirmative value of alterity has been questioned, as have the perspectives which define it: contexts which seem estranged to modern audiences may not have seemed so alien to participants. For example, rather than seeing the *ephebeia* as the deliberate placement of adolescents in a 'liminal' no-man's-land, the ephebes on the borders of Attica were actually patrolling relatively populous and strategic areas for defence (Polinskaya 2003).

Male Age Group Rituals: Conclusions

Although the studies of tribal initiation by van Gennep and Turner show some similar structures to the Cretan and Spartan *agelai* rituals, and a number of recurrent themes are compelling, scholars have recently pointed out some key differences, particularly in the Spartan system. Spartan youths were encouraged, at many levels, to exhibit fierce competition towards each other, rather than the extreme sense of collective equality observed in tribal initiates—the specific goal of this system was military superiority (e.g. Ducat 2006; cf. Turner 1967: 99). The length and commitment required for such an educational process for young Spartans must have limited full citizenship to a relatively small group of the sons of wealthy landowners, and is probably the reason for the expiration of the system sometime in the third century (e.g. Kennell 1995). The pattern of segregation, alternate identity, and reintegration could be widespread because of human mental processes rather than sociology. As Fritz Graf (2003: 19) points out,

> the tripartite sequence turns out to be a very basic narrative structure . . . We begin cognition by separating ourselves from the familiar and known, concentrate on the new and explore it, and finally come back filled with new insight. This fits the stories, because they all seem to talk about the gaining of identity, which in itself is an elementary cognitive process.

Becoming Women: The *Arkteia*

While boys' 'rites of passage' prepared them for lifetime military service and local governance, girls' rites prepared them for marriage, although the manner in which this preparation was carried out is, in some ways, even more curious than the boys' rituals.

There is some evidence for a ritualized transition of girls to adulthood in Athens, the so-called *arkteia*, probably derived from *arktos* 'bear', and associated with two sanctuaries of Artemis in the suburbs of Athens: Artemis Mounichia in the Piraeus and Artemis Brauronia on the east coast of Attica. The *arkteia* is very poorly attested in literary sources, but an important description comes in *Lysistrata*, the fifth-century comedy of Aristophanes, in which the chorus of old women defend their usefulness to the city of Athens on the basis of their history of ritual service,

> As soon as I was seven years old, I was an *arrephoros*;
> then I was a Grinder (*aletris*); when I was ten, at the
> Brauronia,
> I shed my saffron gown as one of the Foundress's
> Bears;
> and I was also once a basket-bearer (*kanephoros*), a
> beautiful girl, wearing
> a string of dried figs. (Ar. *Lys*. 641–7; trans.
> Sommerstein 1990: 83)

These ritual positions offer a selection from the variety of female cult personnel and religious duties performed by girls and women attested for fifth-century Athens (see, in this volume, Dillon, Chapter 17). This list particularly highlights those rituals associated with preparation for marriage—and therefore child-bearing—an appropriate emphasis for the chorus of old women, who are drawing attention to women's contributions to the Peloponnesian war effort.

Drawing on earlier work by Lilly Kahil, Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood compared this passage with images on *krateriskoi*, vases dedicated to Artemis at Brauron and other sites throughout Attica, which feature young girls running naked or wearing a short garment, *chiton* (Kahil 1965, 1977; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988). In these images, the girls appear to be dancing

or running, sometimes around an altar with palm trees, the typical symbol of Delos, birthplace of Artemis. Some images feature bear imagery, either an adult wearing a bear mask or a bear chasing girls towards an altar. The priestess of Artemis is referred to as a 'bear' in the Kyrene cathartic law (*LSS* 115 B.16; Parker 1983: 346), and the goddess is connected with bears in several aetiological myths for the Attic sanctuaries. In the entry for Brauronia in the tenth-century CE Byzantine Greek encyclopaedia *Suda*, the following aetiology is given:

> For there was a wild bear about in (Brauron) and it was tamed and lived with men. But a girl poked fun at it, with her lack of restraint upset it, and it scratched her. This angered her brothers and they shot the bear, as a result of which a plague befell the Athenians. The Athenians consulted an oracle and it said their ills would end if, as a penalty for killing the bear, they made their maidens do the bear ritual. And the Athenians voted that no girl should be married to a man without performing the Bear ritual to the goddess. (trans. Dowden 1989: 21)

A scholiast to Demosthenes 25 describes a 'sacred hunt' at Brauron, and some scholars have drawn this evidence together as indicating that the festival Brauronia marked the end point of a period of service to Artemis in which girls were segregated from their families (Kahil 1977: 33; Cole 1984: 241). The aetiology of a young girl's error triggering divine punishment for the community, which is then assuaged by the continued service of girls for the divinity, is a typical pattern in many festival aetiologies, and a frequent context for the 'girl's tragedy' myth. Brauron not only has the aetiology of the injured bear, but was also considered one of the burial spots of Iphigenia, the chief prototype for the 'girl's tragedy' (e.g. Eur. *IT* 1462–5). Since, in these stories, it is usually the male warrior community on behalf of whom the maiden is sacrificed, the *arkteia* can be interpreted as a symbol of the opposition of life and death, male and female (Henrichs 1981). The bear fits the context of preparation for motherhood because of the Greek perception of its strong maternal instincts, while the comparison of children, particularly girls, to wild animals is pervasive in Greek sources (Arist. *Hist. an*. 579a18–25; Ael. *NA* 2.19; Cole 1984: 241). A further point of relevance may be the hibernation of bears before having cubs: like Persephone they undergo an annual 'death' and 'rebirth' (Perlman 1989).

If marriage can be said to symbolize male social control over women, the adolescent girls' rites of passage reflect the anxiety resulting from the lack of control over female biology and the approach to menarche, after

which point the girl was considered to be ready for marriage. The passivity required of women and activity required of men is expressed through its opposite in the rituals: girls run naked while boys are kidnapped and servile, and so on. Another way of looking at this is that a girl transitions from the status of outsider to insider, a rite encapsulated in the marriage procession from her father to her husband's house, and so her adolescent rites are preparation for a life of exclusion and containment, the opposite of boys' rites (Sourvinou-Inwood 1988).

CONCLUSION

The importance placed on adolescent rituals in Classical scholarship draws on the seemingly disproportionate importance of these rituals for the Greeks, illustrated through their emphasis on the adolescent transition in myth and art (for example, teenage heroic myths, numerous gods connected with adolescent transitions, and the length and extent of these rituals). Adolescent group rituals have been interpreted as part of the rise of the political framework of Greek poleis over smaller, kinship-based groups, but such an approach has recently been increasingly questioned. Although some societies may employ ritual procedures to 'initiate' a change in social status among members, the life-change rituals in many Greek cities neither signal permanent changes in social status nor are obligatory, both of which are defining characteristics in initiation rituals where they can be said to exist. The possibility of such an initiation system in Greek cities for adolescents encouraged scholars to look at other life-change rituals from such a perspective, but the evidence for birth, marriage, or death rituals does not generally support this hypothesis. The Spartan and Cretan systems were something of an anomaly, judging by the ancient testimony, and relatively short-lived. Costume, endurance tests, trickery, and age or gender restrictions are not limited to adolescent rituals but occur in a variety of cultic contexts (see Parker 2011: 214–15).

An ecological approach in which practical factors are considered, rather than 'deep' interpretations influenced by social anthropology, can add some perspective to our perception of adolescence in Greek culture if life

expectancy for adult males in Classical Athens was in the region of 25 years (e.g. Hansen 1985: 10–11), this puts the adolescent stage not at the start, but midway through life. Without a significant elderly population, children and the importance of their growth becomes less a statement on the perceived vulnerability of adolescence per se—this category itself being entirely subjective—and more a meditation on the achievement of survival.

Suggested Reading

Calame (2001) and Ferrari (2003) offer detailed overviews of women's rituals, while Kennel (1995) and Ducat (2006) cover the boys' rituals in Sparta and Crete. The relevant mythical material can be found in Vidal-Naquet 1986 and Dowden 1989. Padilla (1999) and Dodd and Faraone (2003) have collected essays challenging the category 'initiation'. Parker 1983 is a detailed study of pollution in childbirth and death; see also Garland 1990 and Humphreys 1993.

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CHAPTER 36

RITUAL CYCLES: CALENDARS AND FESTIVALS

JAN-MATHIEU CARBON

INTRODUCTION

WHEN dealing with time and Greek religion, we are often concerned with a phenomenon that appears cyclical: the course of successive years, their recurring seasons and events, all represented by a constant calendar. One useful point of entry into the subject may be Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Attempts have even been made to view the second half of the poem as a form of calendar (Kravaritou 2002; Hannah 2005: 18–27; especially on Hes. *Op*. 383–828). Though the verses occasionally mention specific days or months, the didactic chronology is not strictly sequential and the calendrical points of reference are primarily astronomical or astrological: the poem is more of an inspired and manifold almanac, seeking to give advice about toil (*erga*) and timing. Agricultural concerns are addressed, such as when to reap crops and plough fields (namely, the rising and setting of the Pleiades, ll. 383–4), along with a variety of other activities, such as seafaring. Nuggets of received wisdom are frequently interjected,

which amount to proverbs of a sort: ‘remember seasonal work (*horia erga*)’ (l. 422); ‘be mindful of doing each thing in its own time’ (ll. 641–2, a similar expression).

There is a substantial—but not complete—disconnect between Hesiod’s work and the calendars which we find in later Greek sources, primarily as inscriptions or as accounts in other literary sources. Though the year and its seasonal rhythms were clearly defined by the sun, as Hesiod recognized, Greek calendars usually contained a series of twelve lunar months. One has to say ‘calendars’ because Greek cities employed a wide variety of names for their months and diverse starting-points for their calendrical years (Trümpy 1997). Though there is much common ground behind certain groups of calendars, their origins are often mysterious and many probably go back to a time before Hesiod’s poem was composed. What is clear, however, is that the vast majority (if not the entire set) of names of months in Greek calendars have a seasonal or religious significance; sometimes both. They are tied through etymology with specific times of the year or with the names of gods, rituals, and so on (again Trümpy 1997; or Nilsson 1906 for a more detailed discussion). Alongside this etymology, there is also a manifest reference to seasonal work and/or to cultic practice. For instance, Boedromion may have originally denoted the driving of oxen in the Athenian calendar, and Posideon, of course, refers to Poseidon and to sacrifices in his honour.

Beyond a year consisting of lunar months, Greek communities also developed several lengthier, multi-annual cycles of time. Famous among these are the Olympiad and the cycle of the Pythian Games, both quadrennial (in inclusive Greek terms, penteteric) and centred around major festivals at Olympia and Delphi respectively. Much valuable scholarly effort has been, and continues to be, expended in the scientific calculation of Greek chronology and history, notably using these penteteric cycles (Hannah 2005, especially ch. 4; the classic work is Bickerman 1968, with extensive tables). An often remarked crux is that a Greek year consisting of short lunar months (approximately 29.5 days long) regularly grew out of synchrony with the lengthier solar year and thus with the rhythm of the seasons. The addition of a supplementary (intercalary) month was sometimes deemed necessary to adjust the deficit. By the Hellenistic period at least, it might be possible to easily synchronize penteteric, lunar, solar, and other astronomical calendars, such as we find

inscribed on the dials of the famous Antikythera Mechanism (Freeth, Jones, Steele, and Bitsakis 2008).

Recent work still has a tendency to focus on the chronometric deficit of lunar calendars, which is viewed as an exploitable failure in rigorous time-keeping. The result is that Greek calendars, like many other ancient calendars, are envisaged as instruments and publications that were primarily political and social tools (recently, Stern 2012: 25–70). There is an element of truth in that line of argument, but it must not be overemphasized. Natural cycles, as well as religious tradition, were paramount in the composition and the structure of any given Greek calendar. For example, one of the best-known calendars, that of Athens, carefully distinguished between 'political' days—when assembly meetings could be held and law courts were in session—and religious occasions such as sacrifices and festivals (Mikalson 1975). The former could usually only occur when the latter, more or less immobile, did not: in this case, religion habitually trumped politics. In the study of Greek religion, a fruitful approach has been pioneered by a few studies that seek to reconcile Greek lunar months with the solar year in a different way, namely, by taking an example from Hesiod and looking more closely at the seasonal and economic cycles inherent in the order and structure of calendars (for example, Brumfield 1981).

SACRIFICIAL AND FESTAL CALENDARS

One particularly interesting and prominent category in the extant epigraphical evidence is that of sacrificial and festal calendars. We usually define these documents simply as texts that list rituals or festivals in a precise chronological order (*NGSL*: 65–8). They often do not include verbs or conjunctions, and can merely contain elements in the following form: date (or festival); deity (in the dative); offering (usually an animal, in the nominative or the accusative). Other details can be filled in as necessary, but oftentimes they are simply not required. Several Linear B tablets from the final centuries of the second millennium BCE are inscribed with what appear to be lists of provisions or offerings, which are prefixed by month

names or festivals (Trümpy 1997: 2–3). Otherwise, our earliest evidence for Greek sacrificial calendars comes from the Archaic period. Cases include a fragmentary but monumental stele from Corinth (*NGSL*: 65–6, *c*.600–585 BCE) and wall blocks inscribed with the calendar of Miletos (*LSAM* 41, *c*.525–500 BCE). These calendars were manifestly intended for public display. In late Classical Athens, a specific change in the form of the calendars took place, but it was perhaps limited to this period alone. Though the texts remain chronologically arranged, the accounting of the cost and funding of the rituals now becomes essential as an added element in the tabulation (cf. *LSCG* 18, a diminutive stele from Erchia, *c*.375–350 BCE). But that development remains an exception rather than the rule in a group of documents that come from all periods and from a variety of locations in the eastern Aegean.

Greek sacrificial calendars organize religious practice according to what one might call an ideal and traditional sequence, since the order of lunar months and dates is very seldom explicitly correlated with external phenomena or with other records. Beyond the possibility that it could be synchronized externally, it would be a false assumption to view such a calendar as principally a tool for precise time-reckoning. Yet this does not entail that the fixed and cyclically repetitive structure of time was merely symbolic. A sacrificial calendar was a self-standing *aide-mémoire* and therefore perfectly practical in that regard. Only the necessary information about the rituals is mentioned, and the customary timing remains primordial. Any person consulting a copy of the published text, perhaps especially priests and other officials, could view at a glance the key elements of a given day's sacrifice. Like other documents, inscribing calendars was, of course, a political action, potentially enabling revisions, corrections, and other manipulations, but also conferring greater publicity and visibility on the ideal and traditional structure of time in the city. In other words, the form and content of a calendar were elaborated very much in the spirit of the *Works and Days*: the calendar followed the recurring seasons and their essential rituals, enabling one to remain 'mindful of doing each thing in its own time'.

Here, we will look at one telling and vivid case of a sacrificial calendar from a Hellenistic island (in the next section). After tracing a year-long cycle and its seasonal rhythms within a city's religious calendar, it seems appropriate to focus more specifically on highlights of the year, in this

case two major but different festivals, occurring in the same city and during the same month (the following section, ‘Two Holidays at Magnesia-on-the-Maeander’). A temporal lens can attempt to shed some light, not on ‘how it exactly happened’, but on different scales of ritual time—a glimpse of ‘what it felt like’. By following seasonal and yearly rhythms down to major events and celebrations, we can form a suitable impression of the practical details of ritual cycles. Perhaps even some of the experiences attached to these different modes of time may be within our reach.

SEASONAL SNAPSHOTS FROM MYKONOS

From Mykonos in the central Aegean, long overshadowed by its much smaller neighbour, the sacred island of Delos, comes a tall inscribed stele bearing a sacrificial calendar (*LSCG* 96). The preamble of the inscription from Mykonos is short yet nonetheless unusually explicit for these terse documents: ‘Gods. In the archonship of Kratinos, Polyzelos and Philophron, when the cities came together in one community [ll. 2–3], it pleased the Mykonians to sacrifice the following rites in addition to earlier ones [ll. 3–4] and revised concerning earlier ones [ll. 4–5].’ In other words, the calendar must be dated to a specific political context, the *synoikism* (or ‘amalgamation’) of the cities on the island in *c*.230–200 BCE (Reger 2001). This event naturally entailed some modification and recalibration of the rites that would now be shared by the unified citizenry. Since we have so little information about the religious landscape of Mykonos, it is not easy to discern which rituals are ‘additional’ and which are ‘amended’. Nevertheless, because it is so specific to this context and so unusually detailed, and at least half of it is well preserved, the calendar from this small island community is an excellent case for better comprehending and analysing the relationship between rituals and seasonal rhythms.

Let us visualize the scene. It is midwinter. The fields are void and silent. As with many Ionian cities, the year begins in this cold and stormy season on Mykonos (in the Dorian world, by contrast, the year usually begins in

high summer). The month is Posideon: the Mykonians turn their gaze to the sea and to the eponymous god Poseidon. At this time, fishing is the prime source of activity and income (Beresford 2013: 258–9). The concern of the citizenry is naturally to safeguard this initial aspect of its yearly cycle. In a major celebration at the start of the calendar, the twelfth of this first month, Poseidon is honoured with a beautiful and 'uncastrated' white ram in a precinct outside the city, perhaps near the sea (ll. 5–8). Other analogous rites for Poseidon occurred elsewhere, for example at Sinope and Smyrna, sometimes on the same date (Robertson 1984: 7, nos 8 and 9); the timing may have corresponded, more or less, with the winter solstice in December. Another manifestation of Poseidon called Phykios—god of 'seaweed'—is simultaneously honoured with a similar but younger male lamb. Only men—whose business is the sea—can participate in the rites. The civic council is explicitly said to fund these sacrifices from the fishery taxes (l. 10).

Yet the city also begins to look beyond the gloom of midwinter. At the same time as the Posideia are taking place, a verdant Demeter (Chloe) is propitiated with a sacrifice of twin sows (ll. 11–15). One of the two animals is pregnant, and the twin sacrifice is accompanied by two measures of barley grains and three of wine. It would be hard not to read this sacrifice as, to some degree, symbolizing the twin faces of this early part of the year for the Mykonians. They are thankful for past crops and for animal young, but also look forward to and wish to ensure a green and fertile spring. They keep one eye presently on Poseidon and the sea, but another prospectively on Demeter and the land.

A moon or so later, spring is indeed in the air. We are in the month Lenaion and agricultural concerns have now come even more to the fore. Probably at a sanctuary called the Lenaion outside the city, a major festival of the unified community is to take place over the course of three days. On the first, when a song is made for good crops (l. 16), sacrifices are held for Demeter, her daughter Kore, and Zeus Bouleus ('Zeus of Good Council', who is often identified with Plouton, a god of wealth and agricultural prosperity). Once again, the animal offered to Demeter is a pregnant sow, and, in the early spring, one that holds her first litter (l. 16). Barley grains are to be provided for this sacrifice, and particular care is to be taken by the priests and senior officials of the city to ensure that the rites are attractive and the divine omens favourable (ll. 19–20).

Punctiliousness is necessary because the rites are envisioned as vital for the nourishment and prosperity of the whole community.

This festival is also to be distinguished from the one in Posideon by the wide-scale participation of women, whether citizens or foreigners, who are initiates of Demeter. A large gathering of people has taken place in the sanctuary outside the city (l. 23). On the second day of the festival, a sacrifice for Semele, the mother of Dionysos, is held, and on the last day comes finally a sacrifice to Dionysos called Leneus, god of the wine press or wine vat. Since this would seem a rather late stage to harvest and press wine, it may well be that the Lenaia on Mykonos marked a successful harvest, and involved drinking from the wine vat and tasting recently fermented wine, rather than the actual pressing of grapes. A similarly tardy Lenaia took place in Athens, before the sampling of the preceding year's vintage in Anthesterion (February/March). At any rate, the rites clearly marked the beginning of spring. They are framed by a further sacrifice on behalf of crops, in this case to Zeus and Ge (Earth) of the Chthon (the surface of the earth and its underbelly), and consisting of flayed and black yearling animals. This sacrifice has a distinctive colouring—it is also held separately and excludes the participation of strangers—and it harks back to Hesiod and his injunction to propitiate these gods of the dark soil for good grain (Hes. *Op*. 465–6: 'Pray to Zeus Chthonios and Pure Demeter to make the grain mature and heavy . . . when the ploughing begins').

One could hardly ask for a more explicit expression of the seasonal dimension of the calendar than this major celebration. It appears to be the conflation of two separate occasions in the newly unified Mykonian polity: on the one hand, a large-scale festival of Demeter, Zeus, and Earth on behalf of crops; on the other, the Lenaia, in honour of Dionysos and his mother and focused on wine. Men and women leave the city in processions and are gathered together to sacrifice, sing, and drink. They honour the gods of the autumn wine, and, at the same time, herald the coming of spring and its new crops.

In the ensuing months, the year follows its course, but the calendar of Mykonos is somewhat less detailed. In Bacchion, perhaps the month immediately after Lenaion, Dionysos is again celebrated, with the epithet Baccheus and with feasting on a mountain ridge (ll. 26–9). There are possibly other intervening months in which nothing significant happens.

Next, the calendar once again becomes more expansive and we are apparently in early or midsummer, in the month of Hekatombaion—literally, the occasion for the sacrifice of a hundred oxen. If all has gone well, new animals have been born in the spring and the flocks have increased considerably. But the hecatomb is a bit more modest on the small island of Mykonos. On the seventh day of the month—a sacred day for Apollo (cf. again Hes. *Op*. 770–1)—a token bull is sacrificed to the god, who is also the eponym of the month, Apollo Hekatombios, along with ten new lambs symbolic of a hecatomb. The participants are exclusively male: young boys (*paides*) and young men, ones who are of marriageable age or who have been recently married (*nymphioi*), along with the priest and perhaps other men.

In summer, the community's focus has accordingly turned towards this further aspect of its fertility and well-being: animal husbandry and male maturation. Joining Apollo in this one-day festival is another god, Acheloios (also Achelous), who receives virtually the same sacrifice of eleven animals. While Apollo's sacrifice highlights young men and their maturation, this other pendant of the celebration clearly takes place in the countryside, where Acheloios has land consecrated to him (l. 37). In fact, part of the god's sacrifice is slaughtered directly into the river (l. 37). Acheloios is a bull-headed god of rivers; here he must designate the only central watercourse of the island (the modern Megalo Langadi). The river god is worshipped and placated to ensure that the water flows in sufficient (but not excessive) abundance, to moisten meadows and quench the thirst of shepherds' flocks. In the summertime, it is quite possible that this watercourse, like many others in Greece, would have been dry and empty, hence the need to propitiate the god.

The summer month of Hekatombaion was an important turning point in a year on the island of Mykonos. A further sacrifice, taking place in this month, was devoted to the Archegetes or mythical founding hero of the island, presumably the eponymous Mykonos himself (Reger 2001: 179–80 discusses the possibilities). A small feast resulting from this sacrifice once again encapsulated the newly unified community. Regrettably, the lower portion of the stele has now become effaced and we can only barely read the remaining forty or so lines of the sacrificial calendar. These perhaps spanned a further four months or so. This was the undoubtedly equally significant season of autumn, with its harvesting of crops and grapes.

Despite this lacuna, the sacrificial calendar of Mykonos clearly shows how the high points of a given year occurred in direct connection with the seasonal rhythms. In all cases, the relationship between the economy of a small island community in the Aegean (Brun 1996) and its ritual practices is evident. Here, as elsewhere, religion was a yearly progression that formed an inextricable component of the community's outlook and subsistence. The Mykonians began their year with a focus on Poseidon and fishing in the winter, then transitioned to rites for Demeter to prepare for the spring and the coming of the crops, while also paying homage to Dionysos, god of the new autumn wine; in the summer, after the lambing season of the spring, young boys and men honoured Apollo, linking their own maturing with that of new livestock; all the while, the river Acheloios and other deities and heroes formed the heart and core of the island in a geographical, political, and religious sense. The cycle would then begin anew.

TWO HOLIDAYS AT MAGNESIA-ON-THE-MAEANDER

The calendar from Mykonos reveals several major celebrations on the island, which were interspersed throughout the year and formed a coherent, cyclical whole. In various decrees and other inscribed regulations from Greek cities, we receive even more detailed accounts of individual festivals that were momentous occasions in the calendar. These peaks of the year are especially elucidated in lengthy civic decrees that sought to revitalize or enhance festivals in the latter half of the Hellenistic period (generally speaking, the second and first centuries BCE; Paul 2013). This period has sometimes been called an 'Indian summer' of religious life in Greek cities, particularly in western Anatolia (so Deshours 2011). Yet this time was probably not characterized by an increase in religiosity compared to that of the past, but rather by a desire to make worship more prominent and vivid, sometimes due to innovative competition between polities, sometimes for restoring celebrations that had been interrupted

due to wars or had fallen into desuetude; other times for the simple sake of increasing the conspicuousness of existing offerings; often all of the above. Two substantial, inscribed decrees from the city of Magnesia-on-the-Maeander, at the border between Ionia and Karia, may be taken as examples. Together, they constitute a richly detailed dossier concerning the mode of operation of festivals in the same city.

Zeus 'Saviour of the City'

The first decree concerns a sacrifice in honour of Zeus Sosipolis, whose epithet means 'Saviour of the City' (*LSAM* 32, dated to 197/6 or in the 180s BCE; see Wiemer 2009: 123–7, also on the context). We are told little about the motivations for its passing, but the epithet of Zeus may be thought to be key. We know almost nothing else about this manifestation of Zeus, and his cult might be thought to be a fairly recent introduction to the city, perhaps during some recent critical or desperate circumstances. Remains of a temple dating to the early second century BCE have been attributed to the god, and the decree concerning the festival was inscribed on one of its doorposts. The temple of the major goddess of the city, Artemis Leukophryene, was also rebuilt around this time (discussion of both structures in Schädler 1991: 301–12). Asia Minor was a land of wars and conquest during the Hellenistic period, and the dates of the decree for Zeus Sosipolis are no exception: the Seleucid king Antiochos III conquered much of Asia Minor as part of the Roman–Syrian War in 197/6 (Chaniotis 2005: esp. 143–65 for 'the effects of Hellenistic wars on religion'). That does not tell us that Magnesia chose to honour Zeus Sosipolis specifically because of this, but 'the saving of the city', whether from 'occupiers' or even from the depredations of the 'liberators', was clearly present in the minds of its citizens.

Perhaps the written act of foundation of the cult would have dealt with such motivations, but here the focus of the decree is on religion as an oblique but nonetheless revealing mirror for politics. A précis summarizes the primary concerns of the decree: first, the selection of an additional bull for sacrifice; second, the prayer and procession accompanying the ritual; finally, the erection of a circular tent (*tholos*) in the *agora*—where the

Temple of Zeus at Magnesia was located—and the placement of couches within it for hosting the gods (represented by their statues).

The new plan is to purchase a bull several months in advance of the sacrifice. The occasion for the transaction is apparently a general gathering of the people (or *panegyris*), which takes place every year in the month Heraion; that festival is unknown but was perhaps also traditionally linked with Zeus and his consort Hera. The order of the calendar of Magnesia is unclear, but it is probable that this occasion took place in high or late summer. The bull purchased during this annual fair, abuzz with people and animals, is chosen to be 'as beautiful as possible' (l. 12). It could then be fattened up in the intervening time (ll. 59–64, provisions for the purchase and rearing of the bull, called *trophe*; see the liturgy called *boutrophia* at Bargylia *SEG* 45.1508A–B and 50.1101, *c*.120s–100 BCE).

A short while later, during the early autumn, the bull was designated as being destined for Zeus Sosipolis in a special ceremony (Trümpy 1997: 110–11 §94, Kronion = September/October). Furthermore, the occasion explicitly marks the beginning of a new agricultural cycle, 'when the sowing of seeds begins, on the new moon (first day) of the month Kronion' (ll. 14–15). At this time, one proclaims the bull's 'consecration' (*anadeixis*), at which are present most of the prominent officials of the city: the major priests and priestesses, the sacred herald, the military commanders, the administrators, the secretaries of the civic council, as well as a man who is eventually (but not yet!) to do the actual butchering of the animal. Also in attendance are nine boys and an equal number of maidens, sent by their caretakers as participants in the consecration and the ensuing prayers. The inclusion of these children of citizens appears to be aimed again at beautifying the rituals, notably through their invocations and through choral songs. We are expressly told some of the substance of the prayers, and their sentiment is a perfect summation of the concerns of the local community: 'For the safety of the city and the countryside and the citizens and women and children and others who live in the area, and for peace and wealth and a good harvest of grain and all other produce and herds' (ll. 26–31).

Still later is the actual sacrifice to Zeus Sosipolis, on the twelfth of the month Artemision (ll. 34–5). It is unclear exactly how much time has passed since the original purchase of the bull—at least three months, probably more—but it must now have been fairly well known as 'bull-

designate' among the townsfolk and quite plump. Artemision is the principal month in the cultic calendar of Magnesia-on-the-Maeander, falling as far as the spring or summer after the bull was chosen. Rites for the major goddess of the city, Artemis Leukophryene, are known to have occurred on the sixth of the month and may have lasted over several days. The celebration of Zeus Sosipolis takes place some days afterwards, perhaps so as not to anticipate the Leukophryena, but also as an apt continuation of the major festival month of the city. Not only is Zeus himself particularly honoured, but the entire group of the Twelve Gods (Georgoudi 1998: 82) is brought to the fore on the symbolic day of the twelfth.

The statues of these gods are to be carried in the procession wearing their finest raiment (ll. 41–3). A round tent (*tholos*) is to be set up in the *agora* near the altar of these Twelve Gods. The ritual of hosting (*theoxenia*) which is to take place in this temporary tent is focused on a subset of this larger group of Twelve Gods: Zeus, honoured with an additional sacrifice of a ram, to take place on the nearby altar of Zeus Sosipolis; Artemis Leukophryene, as expected; and Apollo Pythios, whose priest, the crown-bearer (*stephanephoros*) of the city, officiates. The statues are arranged on three lavish couches and entertained with music, and are probably offered choice portions from these sacrifices. The significance of this additional ritual within the wider festival appears to be complementary, and at the same time definitional. It stresses that the rites for Zeus Sosipolis lie at the heart of the city whose safety he ensures, in the *agora* where his temple stands, and where the altar of the Twelve Gods is also located. And it further reinforces the city's focus on its principal goddess Artemis Leukophryene, who is hosted alongside her father and brother, a few days after her own festival.

Similarly, the two separate lists of participants in the procession for Zeus and in the *theoxenia* rites are quite carefully structured. As we saw with the proclamation of the bull, a series of high-profile individuals are to be involved in the procession, all exclusively male, such as the major magistrates of the city and male priests, but also invoked are young men, boys, and winners of contests. The number of participants in the triple sacrifice to Zeus, Artemis, and Apollo during the *theoxenia* is much more narrow and selective: the priest called *stephanephoros* and likely the priest of Zeus also, the priestess of Artemis (apparently the sole woman

involved), military commanders, select cultic officials (*neopoiai*), public examiners, and presiding officers of the public bodies, as well as men who have performed liturgies and benefactions for the city.

In other words, this was a highly politically charged celebration and its parameters should be understood as two concentric circles: the larger band of the male *polis*, within which lay a smaller, apparently more elite, ring. The wider, more encompassing circle, shared the bull sacrificed to Zeus (ll. 54–5). Its approximately one hundred kilograms of dressed meat would have provided sufficient material for a feast that included a good portion of the male citizenry of Magnesia-on-the-Maeander. The smaller triple sacrifice to Zeus, Artemis, and Apollo was shared by the more select group of prominent cultic and political officials (ll. 55–9). These two circles epitomize the practical ideals of a Greek city like Magnesia-on-the-Maeander. On the one hand, there was a desire to foster the inclusivity and participation of the citizenry in the augmented worship of the gods; on the other, the elaboration of the day's rituals carefully mirrored the hierarchy of the political core of the city. Over much of the year, from the autumn to spring or summer, the focus of these circles of participants remained on the offering of a bull to Zeus for the safeguarding and the prosperity of the city.

The Special Day of the Isiteria

By contrast, another detailed festival decree from Magnesia-on-the-Maeander may make the occasion for Zeus Sosipolis seem somewhat limited in scope, not to say rather male and elitist. This text (*LSAM* 33A, to be read with Gauthier 1990) concerns a revitalized celebration for Artemis Leukophryene in the city, concomitant with the large-scale development of the festival of the goddess, the Leukophryena. An important and much-discussed inscription informs us that, as a result of an epiphany of the goddess, the Magnesians consulted Delphi (*IMagn*. 16, *c*.208/7–203 BCE; see Paul 2013: 241–4, with references to recent work on the text). The oracle advised them to rebuild her temple and to invite Greek cities to participate in the revamped festival. The principal text discussed here (*LSAM* 33A) is roughly contemporaneous with the decree for Zeus Sosipolis in the early second century BCE, but at least two other

related documents are also known: one now lost, and one dating to about a century later (*LSAM* 33B, *c*.105–85 BCE; for the date, see Santangelo 2006). We therefore have parts of a dossier, inscribed together on the pillar of a stoa in the *agora*. This dossier was gradually constituted, and incrementally sought to augment the celebrations of the fundamental holiday for the Magnesians.

Since a new temple (called Parthenon) for the goddess had recently been constructed, the purpose of the first decree (*LSAM* 33A) is to define the installation of the ancient statue (*xoanon*) of the goddess in this place and the practicalities of rituals for the goddess on the day in question. The setting up of the statue is to take place at a specific moment, the sixth of the eponymous month of the goddess, Artemision, probably in the springtime or early summer, as we have seen. By virtue of the decree, that day is now to be known as the Isiteria, a sacred 'festival of inauguration' (ll. 24–5). The sixth day of a given Greek month was typically sacred to Artemis (Mikalson 1975: 18). It remains unclear, though likely, that this day of the Isiteria had a close relationship with the larger festival of the Leukophryena in honour of the goddess, who was reckoned to be the founder of the city (*Archegetis*, ll. 18–19). The precise dates of the Leukophryena festival within the calendar year are unknown but probably also fell on the sixth as well as the days directly following the Isiteria.

At any rate, the Isiteria must have formed one of the most significant days of the year in the city of Magnesia-on-the-Maeander. The decree begins with the typical invocation for good fortune, but also 'for the safety of the people and of those who are kindly disposed to the Magnesians and their wives and children' (ll. 19–20). In other words, this celebration possessed a broad, almost universal, appeal. The festival of Artemis was therefore intended to involve all the residents of the community, not just male citizens or the inner political body which revolved around Zeus Sosipolis.

The practicalities of the day of the Isiteria are equally all-encompassing. It is to begin first with the actual installation of the statue of the goddess (l. 23) by the temple warden and the priestess, and this is accompanied by a superlative sacrifice. The use of the aorist infinitive form of the verb (ll. 22–3) in connection with these actions, contrasting with present infinitives and imperatives elsewhere in the inscription, suggests that this was a one-off affair: only the first iteration of the Isiteria

will require these rituals for installing the cultic statue. But the inauguration of the statue will be commemorated in perpetuity through similar and other rituals. All mature or married women are to be allowed to enter the sanctuary on the special day of the Isiteria. There, they are to fulfil something unusual beyond the honour (*time*) due to the goddess: a cultic attendance that is described as *paredreia . . . tes theou*, literally 'sitting' or 'installing beside' the goddess (ll. 26–8). This rite not only implies the physical presence of women in the sanctuary as cult attendants and 'co-chairs' of the goddess, but ought also to suggest that the women had specific tactile contacts with the statue. The passage is very brief, but we know from other sources that this *paredreia* may have involved such gestures as washing the statue, clothing it, and beautifying it with various adornments (such were the rites performed by the *genos* of the Praxiergidai at Athens, attested in the very fragmentary *LSCG* 15, *c*.460–450 BCE; and see the festivals called Kallynteria, and Plynteria —'Washing', which took place late in the month Thargelion—early June, Parker 2005: 474–5, 478–9).

Even more than in the case of Zeus Sosipolis, the day is to be a holiday for children and others (ll. 28–31). Choirs of maidens are to sing hymns to Artemis Leukophryene under the supervision of the temple warden. School is out for boys, and even male and female slaves can dispense with their usual labour. The successive annual priestesses of Artemis are to put on a procession and sacrifice to celebrate and commemorate the sacred day (ll. 31–4). As on the first day of the year at Magnesia, the administration and the transaction of goods and wares is also to take place on this day (ll. 34–6). This implies that some accounting took place, but, more importantly, that the Isiteria was market day, as one finds during the other major festivals at Magnesia and elsewhere. A fair (*panegyris*) will have taken place in the *agora* of the city (cp. also *LSAM* 33B, ll. 13–15).

As with the festival of Zeus Sosipolis, we again find a great gathering of important people in this location. Notable men and officials of the city are in their 'best clothes' and wearing laurel wreaths (ll. 36–42), but, as the inscription tells us, the gathering is larger: the *agora* is bustling and full to bursting. After libations have been performed, the sacred herald calls for silence and then addresses the general assembly (ll. 43–8):

> Upon magnificent (and auspicious) *Isiteria*, I invite all of the inhabitants of the city and territory of Magnesia to make a sacrifice pleasing to Artemis Leukophryene on this very

> day, according to their household's means, and to pray that Artemis Leukophryene will give the Magnesians and their wives health and prosperity, and that she will safeguard their existing progeny, and grant them good fortune, and make their future offspring (*epigone*) flourish . . .

The prayer has a wide appeal and the celebration is indeed to be a popular one. Already, a large group of women have had a hand in the celebrations taking place in the temple itself. Certainly, the male elite is once again present at the heart of the procession and the sacrifice, but there is a significant dissemination of the celebration beyond the cultic centre and the *agora*. All citizens and other residents of Magnesia and its surrounding countryside are urged to construct altars for the goddess privately in front of their household doors (cf. also ll. 7–10; and see Schorn 2004: 130–1, fr. *28.2 col. 1, for the papyrus of Satyros concerning altars built in front of houses or on balconies in honour of Arsinoe II at Alexandria; or *FGrHist* 160 F 1 28–30 (III), *c*.246 BCE). It is important to note that participation is apparently voluntary and there is no minimum requirement for these altars: each household is to build one according to its own means (ll. 9 and 45). Of course, some form of competition may naturally have occurred between households, with peer pressure inciting each to surpass his neighbours in constructing something durable or fairly costly, rather than simply erecting a makeshift altar for the goddess. Indeed, the later decree from the dossier (*LSAM* 33B, ll. 38–42) reinforces public participation in this aspect of the Isiteria by invoking a form of curse on those who have bought houses or workshops and failed to build an altar. There, it is also specified that the altars are to be decorated and inscribed 'of Artemis Leukophryene, Bringer-of-Victory' (*Nikephoros*), thus implying that permanent structures were deemed more desirable.

While the festival of Zeus Sosipolis marked a major celebration and feast for the city of Magnesia, and particularly its elite, it is clear that the Isiteria was a different and highly special holiday for the whole community. There was a significant break in the daily routine and drudgery of the year on the sixth of Artemision. Each and every one of the inhabitants took part. Women, children, and even slaves, would be released from their usual obligations and could partake directly in the celebrations. While an important sacrifice was taking place in the centre of town, smaller ones would be offered throughout the city and the surrounding countryside on household altars built for this explicit purpose. Feasts, both

large and small, would be consumed in parties and in familial settings. The circle of reciprocity was perpetuated: honours for Artemis were ubiquitous and, at the same time, she was asked to grant universal benefactions. As the festivities wound down from this pivotal holiday, the annual cycle of the religious calendar at Magnesia-on-the-Maeander would, as always, resume and continue.

CONCLUSION

In a reflective and stimulating introduction to the temporality of Greek religion, Davidson (2007: 237–8) has pointed to what he calls 'three types of time'—accumulative, repetitive, and climactic. While events and innovations accumulate gradually like sand in the course of history, they may also be repeated annually or over even longer periods of time; particularly significant points in the year can reasonably be viewed as climaxes. We have seen these three 'types' at play here: occasions like the rites for Zeus Sosipolis or the Isiteria could be newly added or rekindled, but they would immediately be incorporated into a larger framework, the annual religious calendar of a city. They would form climaxes in a repetitive cycle, much like the celebrations found in the traditional and revised calendar of Mykonos.

Despite their utility, then, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that Davidson's distinctions only form three congruent, perceptible *aspects* (not types) of time and its role in Greek religion. Time, after all, is fundamentally a dimension which is distinguished from space in a Euclidian model, or which forms an integral part of the curvature of space-time in a relativistic model. More plainly, to an ancient Greek time probably appeared *both* as an accretive continuum *and* as an eventful annual cycle. In other words, it was felt in much the same way as it is today, though many of us have now lost touch with the essential rhythms of the year—except the seasons—and, for some of us, much of the background of our holidays has become quite murky.

Time, and especially religious and ritual time, is not easily represented in strict geometric concepts. For the Greeks, as for us, it was periodically

and perpetually punctuated by meaningful highlights and regular celebrations alike. It was concomitantly linear and circular, transcending both of these simple forms.

Suggested Reading

Feeney 2007 is a thoroughly enjoyable and engaging introduction to ancient concepts of time and calendars, especially concentrating on the Roman *fasti* but often keeping an eye on Greece (e.g. ch. 1). Many general surveys are inclined towards chronometry, for instance Hannah 2009. Hannah 2005 is a somewhat more balanced introduction and the small handbook of Nilsson 1962 can still be profitably consulted. A detailed, scientific study of ancient astronomical, astrological, and meteorological calendars can be found in Lehoux 2007.

Following the still useful work of Samuel 1972, Trümpy 1997 is a comprehensive (but sometimes speculative) attempt to reconstruct all of the lunar calendars attested in Greek cities. This is essentially the opposite approach to that which Nilsson adopted in his classic work (1906), which organized festivals according to their principal deity. Nilsson's volume has comprehensive indices and remains a very good source of material, dealing with the whole of the Greek world except Attica. For the better attested festivals from Athens, Parker 2005, part II, is the most learned and insightful contemporary discussion (cf. also app. 1, for a checklist); Mikalson 1975 offers a month-by-month and day-by-day compendium of the Athenian calendar.

For a wider and admirably cautious discussion of 'The Experience of Festivals', see Parker 2011: 171–223 (ch. 6). A different and highly innovative approach can be found in Chaniotis 2006, as well as in a large body of recent work on the dynamic and emotive aspects of festivals and other Greek rituals.

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CHAPTER 37

IMAGINING THE AFTERLIFE

RADCLIFFE G. EDMONDS III

INTRODUCTION

THE question of what happens after the moment of death has always fascinated humanity—at one moment there is a living person, the next only a corpse; where did the person go? Different ways of imagining the afterlife appear in every culture, but scholarly accounts of Greek ideas of the afterlife from Erwin Rohde (1925) onwards have assumed a developmental trajectory, with the drab afterlife of Homer slowly being replaced by forms of afterlife where the dead are more active, closer to Christian ideas. While Rohde's ideas of historical evolution arising from Eastern influences and the internal decadence of the Greek spirit have rightly been rejected, afterlife ideas are still represented as a chronological development by scholars, even those, such as Johnston (2004), who reject Rohde's premises. Jan Bremmer (2002) provides a survey of the 'rise and fall of the afterlife' that positions the Greeks as a preliminary to the Christian development of an afterlife. Albinus (2000) provides a more nuanced picture of two currents of thought interacting within Greek culture, but it remains a story of the replacement of the Homeric view with

an ‘Orphic’ one. I would argue that the dynamic would be better described as an ongoing contest of differing views in which the ideas appear more or less prominently in different contexts and elaborated by different individuals. Moreover, different versions and ideas should be understood as jostling for authority in particular situations, rather than simply authorizing a single canonical version.

The epics of Homer provide vivid images of a bleak and shadowy afterlife, but, although this grim afterlife is often taken to be the standard Greek vision, it is hardly the only way in which the ancient Greeks imagined life after death. In many sources, life after death is a lively extension of the life of the living, either a continuation of its activities and social forms, or a compensation for its problems. This is neither a marginal vision of eccentric religious groups nor a later development of the intellectual and cultural maturity of the late Classical period. On the contrary, varying visions of a lively afterlife appear in sources starting with the earliest literature, and form the underlying ideology of funerary and other ritual practices in all periods.

Two forms of imagining the afterlife in Greek religion may be distinguished: simpler images based on memories of particular people who have died, and more elaborate visions that reflect upon life itself. Memory survival may be personal, limited to imagining a relative persisting in familiar activities and habits, focused upon maintaining a relationship with them. Communities too, however, preserve the memories of significant individuals, through stories, monuments, and rituals. The Greek poetic traditions, especially the epics, provide a means of preserving memories of important heroes (real or imagined) within communities. This imperishable fame remains one of the most significant forms of afterlife survival in the Greek tradition.

More elaborate visions of the afterlife may arise from systematic thinkers who envision the afterlife as part of the larger nature of a world that includes both the living and the dead. Such visions tend to be more elaborate, corresponding in various ways to life in the world of the living; the afterlife may have a geography, a social structure and hierarchy, and a specified relationship with the world of the living. The nature of that relationship varies with the contexts in which these visions are produced. The philosopher Plato envisions an unseen world of the dead that fits within a rational order with the visible world of the living, while a social

commentator like the comedy writer Aristophanes imagines the afterlife as a carnivalesque reflection of the normal world, turning familiar social structures topsy-turvy. These and other imaginings of the afterlife in the Greek religious tradition provide models of the world as their authors understand it, as well as models (positive or negative) for behaviour within it, whether the afterlife imagined is the simple persistence of a remembered loved one or an elaborate vision of the workings of the cosmos.

MEMORY SURVIVAL

Personal Relations and Public Memorials

Imagining the deceased as continuing, in afterlife, as they did during life is the most basic form of imagining the afterlife. For the ancient Greeks, afterlife resembles life, with parallel forms of activity, environment, and even social structures. The memories of what a person did or how that person acted during life provide the material for creating images of what that person might be like after death, and how they might relate to people after they have died: gifts or other tokens of respect are imagined to be just as welcome, while insults or neglect are imagined to merit the resentment of the dead. The dead are thus thought to have feelings and emotions, as well as to continue with their most characteristic activities from life. This imagined life after life of the dead, based on the persisting memories of the dead, is, of course, rather limited, since it tends not to include all the aspects of life for the living. This process of simplification increases the longer the person has been dead, as only the most memorable aspects are preserved in memory. Of course, memories survive only as long as those who have them are still living, although stories that perpetuate the memory of an individual can prolong the process, even if the stories further simplify the memory of the person—preserving (and perhaps embellishing) only the most salient details.

Funeral rituals and cultural expectations regarding the tendance of tombs make clear that the ancient Greeks generally assumed that the dead retained some sentience in their afterlife, and that their reciprocal relations of care and respect with the living persisted (Johnston 1999: 43). Sufficiently respectful performance of funeral rituals was a characteristic of the virtuous man, and Athenian legal speeches show that tendance of family tombs was a significant marker of proper family behaviour (Isae. 2.10, 37, 6.65, 8.38–39; cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol*. 55; Xen. *Mem.* 2.2.13). Maintaining positive relationships with the dead could be as important as maintaining such relations with the living—or even more so. Properly satisfied dead could bring benefits to the family or the polis, while the unsatisfied dead could become a source of trouble—disease, madness, drought, and so on. While the evidence for these ongoing relationships with the dead is relatively scarce, there is no reason to believe that it is either a later development or a primitive superstition the Greeks outgrew, since the earliest evidence appears in the earliest texts and continues through to late antiquity. The *Erinyes* in Homer personify the anger of the dissatisfied dead, as they do in Classical tragedy, and Odysseus, while he is performing libations and sacrifices to the dead at the entrance to the underworld, even makes an elaborate promise to perform further rituals upon his return to Ithaca for the satisfaction of the dead (*Od*. 11. 29–33, cf. *Od*. 10.521–6). Homer's audience, in whatever era, would have understood such rituals not as pointless mummery vainly trying to attract the witless dead, but rather as a meaningful attempt to influence conscious entities who could make a substantive response.

The afterlife of the departed is not imagined only through the personal memories of individuals who knew the deceased, but also through various forms of public memorialization. The epitaphs that enjoin the passer-by to stop and remember the deceased bring the living into conversation with the dead, while larger-scale public monuments, like that for the Marathon war dead, maintain the memory of the individual for more people for even longer.

Individuals who provided benefits for the community might continue to be honoured with cult activity after death. Pindar describes how Battos, the founder of Kyrene, was given a tomb in the public *agora* and honoured after his death, while Herodotos describes the sacrifices and athletic festivals performed in honour of Miltiades at Cardia in recognition of his

leadership (Pind. *Pyth*. 5.93–5; Hdt. 6.38; on *oikist* cult, see, in this volume, Shepherd, Chapter 38). The inhabitants of Amphipolis, Thucydides relates (5.11.1), turned the tomb of the Spartan general Brasidas into a hero shrine and held annual festivals with sacrifices and athletic games in honour of the man who had done so much for them against the Athenians. Going beyond the passive presence of a monument, a festival provides an active way for a community to maintain a relationship with a person who has died. The deceased lives on in the afterlife as a hero who appreciates the honours and offerings of the community, even if there is little concern for the precise nature of his afterlife existence. While some Athenian drinking songs imagine Harmodios the tyrant slayer living on in the Isles of the Blessed (*Carmina Convivialia PMG* fr. 11), little evidence survives of where or in what conditions *oikist*s or other community heroes were imagined to live out their afterlives. For the purposes of the ritual, it was sufficient to know that they would bring good fortune to the community that honoured them.

The Epic Tradition

While ritual celebrations honouring a hero are perhaps the ultimate way of preserving someone's memory, to have one's deeds celebrated in epic remains one of the most significant modes of afterlife within the Greek tradition. There can be no doubt that such poetic immortality was indeed valued, and sought after, by the audiences of Homeric and other epic poetry from the Archaic Age onwards. Such survival in memory was particularly sought after by the aristocrats, who competed for honour and recognition in games and in war, in the assemblies and in the symposia. The fifth-century epinician poet, Pindar, and his like, provide a similar sort of immortality for the victors in the Panhellenic contests, while Simonides' poems on the 479 BCE victory at Plataia show this competition for epic glory continuing into the time of the Persian Wars (both the poem on the battle, the so-called 'new Simonides', on which see Boedeker and Sider 2001, and his epigram 7.251 on those who fell at Plataia).

While some poems do imagine specific places and features of the afterlife, the poetic tradition—and Homeric epic in particular—emphasizes memory survival through song over any other form of

afterlife. The Homeric poet repeatedly drives home the message that only the kind of poetic immortality he can provide is valuable; all other things that one might desire in life are secondary. At the heart of the *Iliad* is the choice of Achilles—immortal fame rather than a safe homecoming—and other Homeric heroes also make choices so that they may become a subject of song for men in time to come (Hom. *Il*. 9.410–16; cf. *Il*. 2.119, 3.287, 3.460, 6.358, 22.305; *Od*. 3.204, 8.580, 11.76, 21.255, 24.433).

To sustain such an idea, the primary image of afterlife in the Homeric epics is exceedingly bleak and unappealing. In a few crucial scenes where the characters reflect upon the nature of life after death, the message is hammered home that there is nothing there to look forward to. When the shade of Patroklos appears to Achilles, he refers to the other ghosts as phantom souls of the worn out (*Il*. 23.72). Achilles too laments the wretched condition of the souls of the dead, as does Odysseus when he tries to embrace the shade of his mother in the underworld (*Il*. 23.103–4; *Od*. 11.218–222; on the development of the idea of the soul, see Claus 1981, Clarke 1999, and, in this volume, Voutiras, Chapter 27). This bleak vision is fundamental to the Homeric idea of the hero's choice—only in life is there any meaningful existence, so the hero must choose to do glorious deeds. Since death is inevitable, Sarpedon points out (*Il*. 12.322–8), the hero should not try to avoid it but go out into the front of the battle and win honour and glory. Such glory (*kleos*) is the only thing that really is imperishable (*aphthiton*), the only meaningful form of immortality.

While the *Iliad* centres on Achilles' choice of deaths (glorious death in battle or ignominious death at home), the *Odyssey* frames the issue as a choice of immortalities. Odysseus rejects the immortality offered by Kalypso because, whatever its attractions, it would result in his own story, his poetic immortality, becoming lost (cf. Crane 1988). Odysseus' famous journey to the underworld reinforces the importance of epic memory as the only meaningful form of immortality, not just through his pathetic encounter with his mother, but through the parade of famous dead whom he meets—and whose memories he evokes for the audience of his story. These heroes and heroines live on vividly in epic poetry, even if their afterlife existence in Hades is merely a dim shadow. Achilles, who chose to die young and glorious, would, of course, rather be alive again than remain among the dead, but he does not repudiate his earlier choice. Moreover, after his characteristic complaining, he is delighted to hear that

his son, Neoptolemos, is securing himself immortality through his glorious deeds (*Od*. 11. 486–540).

The force and artistry with which this message is put forth in the Homeric poems have led some scholars to suppose that it was a standard belief for all Greeks at the time of the poems' composition, with alternatives being imagined only later. However, even within the Homeric poems, the uniformly dreary afterlife is not the only vision presented, as commentators since antiquity have noticed. Outside the few passages that emphasize the helplessness of the shades, the Homeric references to life after death provide a much livelier picture of the afterlife (Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 79). The pursuits of the dead mirror the world of the living, and the social hierarchies of the living world persist in some form after death.

This afterlife was not imagined to be uniform for all; those who had angered the gods continued their punishments in the afterlife, while those who had won their favour continued to enjoy its benefits. In this vision, the dead were imagined to have feelings and emotions, memories of their lives in the sun, and the ability to know of and even interfere in the world of the living. They were thought to appreciate the attentions paid to them by the living, not simply burial and funeral rituals, but also offerings made subsequently at the tomb. Although this differentiated afterlife is in direct conflict with the uniformly dreary one that underscores the importance of heroic glory, it appears even in the epics as the default version underlying the epic vision of poetic immortality. Outside the epics a lively afterlife is also taken for granted as the basis for funerary ritual, the cult of important figures, and other ritual practices that involve the dead.

THINKING WITH THE AFTERLIFE

Ritual has little room for elaborated imaginations of the afterlife, but these do appear in the literary and mythic tradition from Homer onwards. The afterlife is endlessly 'good to think with', and many authors from different periods make use of the Greek mythic tradition to imagine the afterlife, crafting their visions to express their own ideas. While all of these

imaginings make use of a common set of images, names, and story patterns that derive from the shared Greek mythic tradition, the particular texts themselves are the products of *bricolage*, that is, patched together according to the intentions of a particular author (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 16–36). Some of these picture the world reflected through the world of the dead, while others use the contrast between the worlds of the living and the dead to point to how the world should be. Because they all use traditional mythic pieces, each imagining makes sense to its audience, gaining authority from its use of familiar images and elements. Nevertheless, there is no single way in which the afterlife was understood or imagined by all the Greeks at any time, much less at all times.

Continuation vs. Compensation

The simplest way to imagine the afterlife is as a reflection of life, albeit less vivid and colourful. Such a simple vision appears in the underworld scene of the *Odyssey*: the legendary hunter Orion continues to chase game over the asphodel meadows; the famous king Minos continues to fill the kingly duty of judging lawsuits. That the dead continue to engage in legal disputes after death is perhaps the best indicator of this continuity (*Od.* 11.568–75). Similarly, vase paintings depict the dead engaged in a variety of pleasant pursuits, games like *pessoi* or dice, while Pindar (fr. 130) has the dead engaging in horsemanship, gymnastics, and lyre-playing. These are the activities of aristocrats, for life's social stratifications remain in place in the afterlife.

Such an image of the afterlife requires the least modification of memories of the dead: they persist in the same patterns as before death, even if their features are reduced to only the most salient and their activities to only their best known. This image of the afterlife appears as a default, when there is no reason to do any more than evoke the memories of famous people. It does not lend itself to extended development: even in Homer it appears only in the background of the epic vision articulated in the crucial scenes.

In many texts, however, the rupture between life and afterlife is the significant feature; the dead are gone and inaccessible to those left behind in life. In the mythic imagination, this rupture is often represented by

some barrier or obstacle that separates the worlds of the living and the dead. The afterlife takes place in the underworld or perhaps off in the uttermost west, beyond where the sun goes down at the farthest shore of the encircling river Ocean. In Homer, Kirke describes the rivers of the underworld as Acheron, Pyriphlegethon, Kokytos, and Styx (*Od*. 10.514), and Patroklos complains to Achilles that he cannot cross the river into Hades until his body has received burial (*Il*. 23.72–4). Although he does not appear in Homeric epic, in other sources Charon brings the dead across the river to their new world and new life in the afterlife, and graves from the late Classical and Hellenistic period often include coins to pay the infernal ferryman. While Charon, like the psychopomp Hermes, enables the dead to reach the underworld, leading them past the barriers that stand in the way of the living, other barriers ensure that the dead stay in the afterlife. The gates of Hades are proverbial for the finality of death, while the monstrous hound Kerberos stands guard over the entryway (Hes. *Theog*. 770–5). All these boundaries mark the separation of afterlife from life, highlighting the differences between life and death.

Most of the accounts of the afterlife in the Greek tradition stress not the continuity of afterlife with life, but rather the ways in which the afterlife compensates for the injustices of life. Those who have done wrong without visible retribution receive the punishments they deserve, while those who lived well without visible compensation find their reward. The heroes of epic, like the virtuous in Pindar, go to the Isles of the Blessed, where they enjoy a life of pleasure without toil (Hes. *Op*. 168–73; cf. Hom. *Od*. 4.561–9). Evildoers, on the other hand, suffer in the black pit of Tartaros. The geographical separation of the dead in the afterlife appears in a variety of the evidence, from the marginal gold tablets to the myths of Plato, to the Athenian drinking song that puts Harmodios in the Isles of the Blessed—and the nature of its topography varies in turn. Darkness and mud characterize an unhappy afterlife in a variety of sources, in contrast to light and air for the happy, who dwell in a place of pleasant conditions, with sunlight, shade, cool breezes, surrounded by flowers and meadows, near cool, running water. A good afterlife is full of the things that make for a good life, which is to say the life of a nobleman or other privileged type.

Although Pindar describes the fortunate dead as engaged in aristocratic pursuits like riding and hunting, the most popular aristocratic activity for

the afterlife (as in life) seems to be the symposium. Hundreds of funeral reliefs depict the deceased reclining on a symposiastic couch, often with cup in hand and sometimes even with a woman at the foot of the couch (Thönges-Stringaris 1965). The best afterlife is often imagined as an everlasting festival, one of the best experiences of life, and numerous funerary inscriptions attest to the idea of choral dancing in the afterlife (e.g. 151.5, 189.6, 218.16, 411.4, 506.8 in Kaibel 1878). Such testimonies indicate how widespread, and indeed commonplace, it was to imagine that one's recently departed relative would enjoy a happy afterlife.

Afterlife Judgement

In many sources, the separation of the good and bad seems to happen automatically, but others put emphasis on the process. Perhaps the earliest extant reference to a process of judgement comes in Pindar's second *Olympian Ode* (58–60), where an unspecified judge assigns recompense for the deeds of life, a blissful existence without toil for the good, unbearable toil for the bad. Other sources specify the judges as underworld divinities—Hades or a Zeus below the earth—or as particular semi-divine figures, Minos, Rhadamanthys, Aiakos, and even Triptolemos (Aesch. *Eum*. 273–4; cf. *Supp*. 230–1 and Pl. *Grg*. 524a, *Ap*. 41a). This idea of afterlife judgement is common enough for Plato, in his *Republic*, to depict the old man Kephalos as starting to imagine that perhaps he might have something to worry about after death (Pl. *Resp*. 330d–331a). Kephalos refers to myths he has heard—not special doctrines, but familiar traditional tales—which assign punishment in the afterlife for injustices committed in life. While he had not taken them seriously while younger, he says that the approach of death causes people to examine their lives to see if they will have any penalties to pay. Those who discover crimes they have not paid for get anxious, while those who can't think of any wrongs they have done are buoyed up by hope. Plato's depiction of this old man captures the important role played by personal circumstances in the way people or groups imagined the afterlife.

Although Homer's epic depicts a few exceptional figures like Tantalos and Sisyphos receiving punishment in the underworld (*Od*. 11. 576–600), elaborate descriptions of underworld retributions come mostly from later

sources, causing some scholars to suppose that a compensatory afterlife is a later invention. However, not only does such compensation appear in our earliest textual source, but Pausanias (10.28.4–6) tells us of the great painting of the underworld by the fifth-century BCE painter Polygnotos, which included such depictions. Many of the figures in the painting were merely famous people continuing the actions for which they were famous in life—Agamemnon holding a sceptre, Orpheus playing his lyre, Eriphyle holding a necklace, even Actaion with a deerskin—but some are depicted suffering punishments for their actions in life. A man who treated his father unjustly is being throttled by him, while another who plundered a temple is being tormented by a female skilled in poisons. Pausanias comments that the Greeks in Polygnotos' time thought that failing to respect parents and the gods were the worst of crimes, and that is why Polygnotos has illustrated these cases. Polygnotos' painting, while exceptional in size and scope, is not exceptional in its subject matter: numerous vase paintings show scenes of underworld reward or punishment, and a Demosthenic speech mentions paintings depicting the afterlife torments of the impious as a familiar trope for his audience ([Dem.] 25.53).

IMAGES OF AFTERLIFE

Special Treatment for Special People

Polygnotos' painting adorned the walls of the Knidian Lesche (Clubhouse) at Delphi, alongside other images from the Trojan War and other familiar mythic tales. The Lesche was not just used by Knidians: visitors could come in and marvel at the images on the walls. Polygnotos' image of the afterlife was therefore aimed at a common audience, evoking familiar myths and shared ideas. By contrast, the images of the underworld found on the so-called 'Orphic' gold tablets were designed for a very private audience, perhaps only the individuals in whose graves they were placed (see Edmonds 2004: 64–82, as well as the texts and essays in Edmonds

2011). Some of these texts refer to rewards in the afterlife for the exceptionally pure or those well-favoured by the gods. Two tablets ask Persephone to send the bearer to the seats of the blessed (Tablets A2 and A3 = OF 489 and 490B), while others refer to celebrations of festivals beneath the earth, where the deceased will receive wine (D1 and D2 = OF 485 and 496B).

The deceased claims to be pure and from the pure or to have been specially liberated by Dionysos Bacchios, and such claims may reflect the special relationship with the divine produced by rituals known as *teletai*. Often misleadingly translated as 'initiations', such rituals provide not an entry into an organized group, but rather a closer relation with the god to whom the rite is directed—by paying special honour to the god, the mortal receives special favour. Such favours can extend beyond one's lifetime into the afterlife; the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (480–2) promises that those who honour Persephone in the mysteries will receive a favourable place in the underworld. While the Eleusinian mysteries had the greatest reputation, particularly within the culture sphere of Athens, participation in such rituals was widely recognized as a means of securing a better afterlife: the neglect of such rituals could doom one to an unhappy afterlife without the favour of the gods (Ar. *Pax* 371; Pind. fr. 137; Soph. fr. 837; Isoc. 4.28; Paus. 10.31.9, 11).

By promising a special place in the seats of the blessed or among the chorus of *mystai* ('ritual celebrants'), the gold tablets offer a reward of favourable status in the afterlife that will compensate for any lack during life. The graves in which the tablets have been found are, for the most part, commonplace and unremarkable. The tablets presumably provide a means of asserting the special identity of the deceased that transcends the usual categories of polis, *genos*, and family. They provide instructions for the deceased to make her way into the underworld, telling her what path to choose or what to say in order to achieve a successful transition from life to afterlife, making use of familiar motifs from the mythic tradition to create an image of the afterlife in which the deceased is among the most happy and fortunate. Some tablets envisage an encounter with Persephone, Queen of the underworld, while others describe a white cypress tree shining in the gloom of Hades that marks the path leading to the spring of Memory (or Forgetfulness). The deceased must either proclaim her ritual purity or her special connection with the family of the gods, and it is this

claim of identity, rather than a description of the favourable afterlife, that is the central concern of the tablets. Indeed, the results of the successful transition are mere allusions to familiar rewards, like the company of the blessed dead. These tablets are designed to emphasize the process of transition rather than the state of existence after death; the image of the afterlife fits the intended function of the text.

A Comic Turn

In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, a play with a chorus of *mystai*, the focus is upon the contrasting fates of the happy and unhappy dead, as the comedian takes aim at various prominent figures in Athens, a city which, in the final months of the Peloponnesian War, has gone *eis korakas*, 'to the crows' or, simply, straight to Hell (Ar. *Ran*. 1477–8, cf. 188–9). The tag from Euripides, 'Who knows if life be death or death life?', is a running joke throughout the play, and the world below, the afterlife, is very much a reflection of the world above, although Aristophanes naturally shows it through a distorted funhouse mirror, rather providing a simple reflection (see Edmonds 2004: 121). The chorus of *mystai* revel in the sunlight, enjoying pleasures that recall the delights of the Eleusinian festivals during life. They ban from their company—with a parody of the Eleusinian *prorrhesis* barring murders and barbarians—all those who are detrimental to the welfare of the city, especially politicians who stir up factionalism or otherwise exploit the city's troubles for their own profit (Ar. *Ran*. 353–71). Such folk are not deserving of the happy afterlife of the chorus; they instead belong in the great muck and ever-flowing excrement to which the unworthy are doomed (Ar. *Ran*. 145–51, 274–6). Aristophanes uses the traditional images of afterlife compensation in his comic social commentary, presenting the afterlife as a carnivalesque reflection of contemporary life. The troubles of life are rectified in the afterlife: the Athenian people, enduring the last phases of the war, are represented in the play by the blissful chorus of Eleusinian *mystai*, while those profiting from Athens' troubles suffer torments and humiliations.

The Spell of Plato

Some of the most powerful and influential imaginings of the afterlife in Greek religion appear in the myths that Plato incorporates into his dialogues. Plato carefully manipulates traditional motifs to provide images of the afterlife that not only correlate with and illustrate the philosophical discussions in a particular dialogue, but also set out a vision that coheres with his ideas of life and the order of the cosmos. Plato uses the afterlife 'to think with', adapting traditional images and ideas with an artistry that influenced imaginings of the afterlife for millennia.

One of his themes is the role of self-examination, and the importance of reflection. The myth in the *Phaedo*, with its complex geography, illustrates the perils facing someone who relies entirely on the visible world of the senses instead of the invisible world of thought (see Edmonds 2004: 159–220). In the *Gorgias*, Socrates explicitly discusses his methods of argumentation through the *elenchos*, in contrast with those of his rhetorical interlocutors—and his description of the process of afterlife judgement provides an illustration of this contrast: the vivid picture of the soul stripped naked and revealing all its deformities and scars to the expert eye of the judge is an image of the Socratic *elenchos* (cf. Edmonds 2012). At the end of the *Republic*, in the myth of Er, Plato also makes use of traditional mythic images of a judgement of the soul, along with some less familiar ideas, like reincarnation, to highlight the critical role of self-examination. The peculiar double process of determining one's lot after death reflects the distinction, made throughout the dialogue, between the extrinsic recompense for justice and its intrinsic worth. The first judgement, which sends the deceased to a thousand years of bliss or torment, is compensatory for the life lived, precisely the kind of extrinsic reward or punishment for justice that Socrates and his interlocutors dismiss at the start of the discussion as an insufficient defence of the true value of philosophic justice (Pl. *Resp*. 614c–d, 615a–b). After the thousand years, however, the souls return to the place of judgement for the selection of the next life. Here, despite the lottery that determines the order of choosing, the new fate of the soul depends entirely on its ability to examine itself and make the appropriate judgement. The soul with the first choice, having lived a basically good life in a good city, never developed the ability to correct itself and so tragically chooses wrongly, taking the life of a tyrant with unlimited power, doomed to eat his own children and other typical misfortunes of tyrants (619b–d). By contrast, the soul of

Odysseus, having learned from his long suffering how to curb his impulses, makes the good choice of a just and philosophic life. Here, only the inherently just soul, philosophically trained to examine and govern its impulses and appetites, can make the right kind of choice when a really important crisis comes (600b). Again, by transposing the judgement of an external judge into a personal choice, Plato uses the traditional mythic elements to illustrate the processes of philosophic thought, self-examination, and judgement discussed in the dialogues.

While ideas of judgement and differentiated fates for the good and the bad are familiar motifs in the evidence for Greek imaginings of a compensatory afterlife, the idea of reincarnation that appears in the *Republic* myth is an unusual one, appearing only in a limited range of philosophical sources in connection with certain cosmological ideas (see Edmonds 2013). For Plato, the idea that souls return to other bodies appropriate to their natures illustrates the inherent rational order and justice in the cosmos. This ethicized version of reincarnation does not appear before Plato, even though Pythagoras is the figure traditionally credited with the idea of transmigration (Xenophanes fr. 7 = Diog. Laert. 8.36). The Pythagoreans, as Aristotle complains, imagine transmigration of any soul to any body, regardless of the suitability of the soul for the body, and the most substantive early evidence, Empedokles' list of incarnations—a boy, a girl, a bird, a plant, and a fish—baffles any attempt to find the reasons behind his change of lives (Arist. *De an*. 407b20; Empedokles fr. 117 = Hippol. *Haer*. 1.3.2.3–4 = Diog. Laert. 8.77). Empedokles' idea of such random reincarnations is perhaps more plausibly linked to his theory of basic elements that combine and recombine to make all things than to a Platonic notion of cosmic justice. The return to life through a series of reincarnations is a peculiar form of afterlife, which may be combined, as in Plato, with other modes of afterlife, or stand on its own as part of a vision of the workings of the cosmos.

While reincarnation is generally marked as an extra-ordinary idea whenever it appears in the evidence, the idea that most surprises Socrates' interlocutors in the *Republic* is the notion that the soul is actually immortal (608d2–6). The image of a soul persisting after death, even being judged and experiencing rewards and punishments, is familiar from the mythic tradition, but the idea that all souls are immortal, the same kind

of thing as the gods, is shocking. Previously the idea was that only a few exceptional figures, the heroes of myth or the greatest founders and benefactors of society, achieve this status that Plato assigns to all soul by nature (Empedokles fr. 112 = Diog. Laert. 8.62). Plato makes use of images and ideas from his philosophical predecessors speculating about the nature of the soul and the cosmos just as much as he uses ideas from the mythic tradition, reshaping them all and weaving them into his own imaginings of the afterlife to serve his own philosophical agenda.

CONCLUSION: NEITHER SINGLE NOR SIMPLE

From simple visions of the deceased continuing after death as they were best remembered in life, to elaborate literary and philosophical imaginings of an afterlife that support complex ethical and cosmological ideas, the images of afterlife in the Greek religious tradition make use of familiar mythic elements to articulate their ideas. Underworld denizens such as Kerberos or Persephone continue to appear in literature from Homer to Plato, along with geographic features such as the river Styx, the Elysian Field, or the pit of Tartaros. These traditional features were combined and recombined in different ways by different authors, and no single vision ever prevailed. Even though Homer's epic vision of poetic immortality, as preferable to a bleak and shadowy existence in Hades, remained influential within the poetic literary tradition, ritual practices such as funerary cult attest that other ideas of a more lively afterlife were widespread, and not merely the province of marginal religious groups or avant-garde philosophers.

The form in which the afterlife is imagined depends on the one doing the imagining, and their ideas and intentions. Shaped by the familiar tropes of the Greek mythic tradition, the specific features of each account arise from the *bricolage* performed by the one imagining the afterlife. Individuals, families, and even whole communities would transform their memories of the living into a vision of afterlife existence. This kind of

memory survival maintains the relationships between the living and the dead, while preserving important models of exemplary behaviour (or its opposite). As these models are elaborated, in poetic form or philosophic argument, they help to shape models of the way the cosmos works, how life and death are intertwined, how the elements of the world combine and recombine into new forms, or even how balance and justice ultimately prevail in a cosmos governed by rationality. The ancient Greek imagining of the afterlife is, as Plato says of the path to Hades (*Phd*. 108a), neither single nor simple, but as rich and complex as any other aspect of the Greek mythic and religious tradition.

Suggested Reading

Garland 1985 and Vermeule 1979 remain excellent basic introductions to the topic, while Johnston 2004 sums up the material concisely. Sourvinou-Inwood 1995 provides a dense and complicated look at the ideas of death and afterlife in the Greek tradition, and Johnston 1999 examines ideas of afterlife through an analysis of the problematic dead. References to nearly all the relevant evidence can be found in Rohde 1925, even though his nineteenth-century interpretive framework distorts its significance. The studies of Albinus 2000 and Bremmer 2002 likewise provide good coverage of the evidence, but their interpretive frames are also, at times, problematic. Edmonds (2014) provides a more detailed treatment of many of these themes.

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PART IX

BEYOND?

CHAPTER 38

MAGNA GRAECIA (SOUTH ITALY AND SICILY)

GILLIAN SHEPHERD

INTRODUCTION

SOME of the most impressive testaments to ancient Greek religion are to be found not in Greece, but in Sicily and South Italy, where landscapes are still dominated today by magnificent Doric temples, much as they were in antiquity. Despite being unmistakeably Greek, these temples nevertheless differ in a number of significant respects from their mainland Greek counterparts; just as for other aspects of Western Greek culture, the evidence for religion suggests it did not necessarily entail a straightforward duplication of homeland practices.

This chapter aims to review Greek religion in Magna Graecia in the Archaic and Classical periods. It is divided into three sections: an overview of the broad religious profiles of the Western Greek states, including evidence for the transfer and duplication of cults from mainland Greece, but also the routes by which states might produce individualized religious frameworks independent of any other Greek city; a brief

discussion of the physical evidence for Western Greek religion, especially the temples; and, finally, a review of the evidence for the maintenance of religious ties with Greece, often seen as fundamental to interstate relationships. It concentrates on Sicily, since some of the best evidence (both textual and archaeological) relates to that island; it should be noted that while the term 'Magna Graecia' in its strictest application only incorporates South Italy, here it will also be used in its more casual sense to include Sicily, in the interests of convenience.

RELIGION IN MAGNA GRAECIA: TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Transfer of Cult

A long-standing view of religion in Magna Graecia is that, with only a few exceptions, particular cults can be traced back specifically to the relevant historical mother-city, or else to Panhellenic cults such as Zeus Olympios (Dunbabin 1948: 177–83; on the difficult concept of Panhellenic, see, in this volume, Constantakopoulou, Chapter 19). It is a view based on a range of contributing factors: one is that there is some evidence that just such a scenario did indeed occur; it is also a situation that might be predicted and has, to some degree, been assumed, given the broad cult similarities of Greek states and the haziness of our detailed knowledge of cults of the later eighth and earlier seventh centuries. Such an assumption forms part of a wider and older understanding that Greek settlements abroad duplicated the cultural practices of their mother-cities; these assessments were informed partly by passages such as Thucydides' reporting of relationships between Corinth and Corcyra (1.25.4 and 1.38.2–4; see further 'Mother-Cities' below) and the influence of modern imperialist models on the study of Greek settlement in the West (for discussion, see Shepherd 2005a, with references).

In terms of tracing the transfer of cults from a mother-city to a new foundation, a classic case study is the three-generation sequence of

Megara (Nisaia) in Greece and Megara Hyblaia and Selinus in Sicily (Hanell 1934: 174 ff.; Manni 1975; cf. Fischer-Hansen 2009: 217). Although (despite recent excavation) the deities of Megara Hyblaia remain a mystery (Gras, Tréziny, and Broise 2004: 553), the city is chronologically framed by its mother-city and sub-colony, for which the cults are better known. The evidence for Selinuntine cults is rather stronger than that for Megara, since it comes mainly from a fifth-century BCE inscription (*IG* XIV 268) that lists gods in a thank-offering for a victory; for Megara, the evidence is primarily the account provided by Pausanias (1.39.4–44.3), the late date of which makes its use for reconstructing the cults of Archaic Megara, let alone Megara Hyblaia, problematic.

However, two deities attested at Selinus and Megara might point to a specific link and provide more compelling evidence than the simple repetition of the regular deities worshipped all over the Greek world. Pausanias (1.44.4) reports a sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros for Megara. At Selinus, in addition to a goddess Malophoros, named on the inscription, a sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros has been identified west of the city. The other cult—although a less convincing one due to its diffusion throughout the Greek world especially as a private cult—is that of Zeus Melichios, attested at Selinus through numerous inscriptions in a precinct near the Malophoros sanctuary and the *lex sacra* (a fifth-century inscribed lead tablet believed to come from Selinus), and at Megara as a private cult, from an inscribed boundary marker (Jameson, Jordan, and Kotansky 1993: esp. 81–102).

Nevertheless, while the transfer of cults and maintenance of familiar religion are inherently likely, there was still room for manoeuvre and manipulation in the formulation of religion in the Greek West. This is indicated by the Selinus inscription, which identifies a new deity, Pasikrateia (‘All-ruling goddess’, possibly to be identified with Kore; see Calder 1963: 32, with references). Whichever cults were or were not transferred from homeland cities in the earlier stages of settlement, it seems clear that it was not a simple case of duplication and maintenance of nostalgic ties through identical cults: over time, the individual religious profiles of Western Greek states were moulded so that they distinguished themselves from their cities of origin through sacral independence, much

like any other Greek polis. This might be achieved in a variety of ways, and often with some rapidity.

The introduction of minor local deities was an obvious route to achieving religious and cultic distinction. At Syracuse, a cult of the nymph Arethousa was centred around the freshwater spring on the island of Ortygia, which is in unusual proximity to the sea (Figure 38.1)—the sort of geographical anomaly that prompted a sense of inherent sacredness in the minds of the Greeks, and often led to the establishment of a cult (Malkin 1987: 141–2).

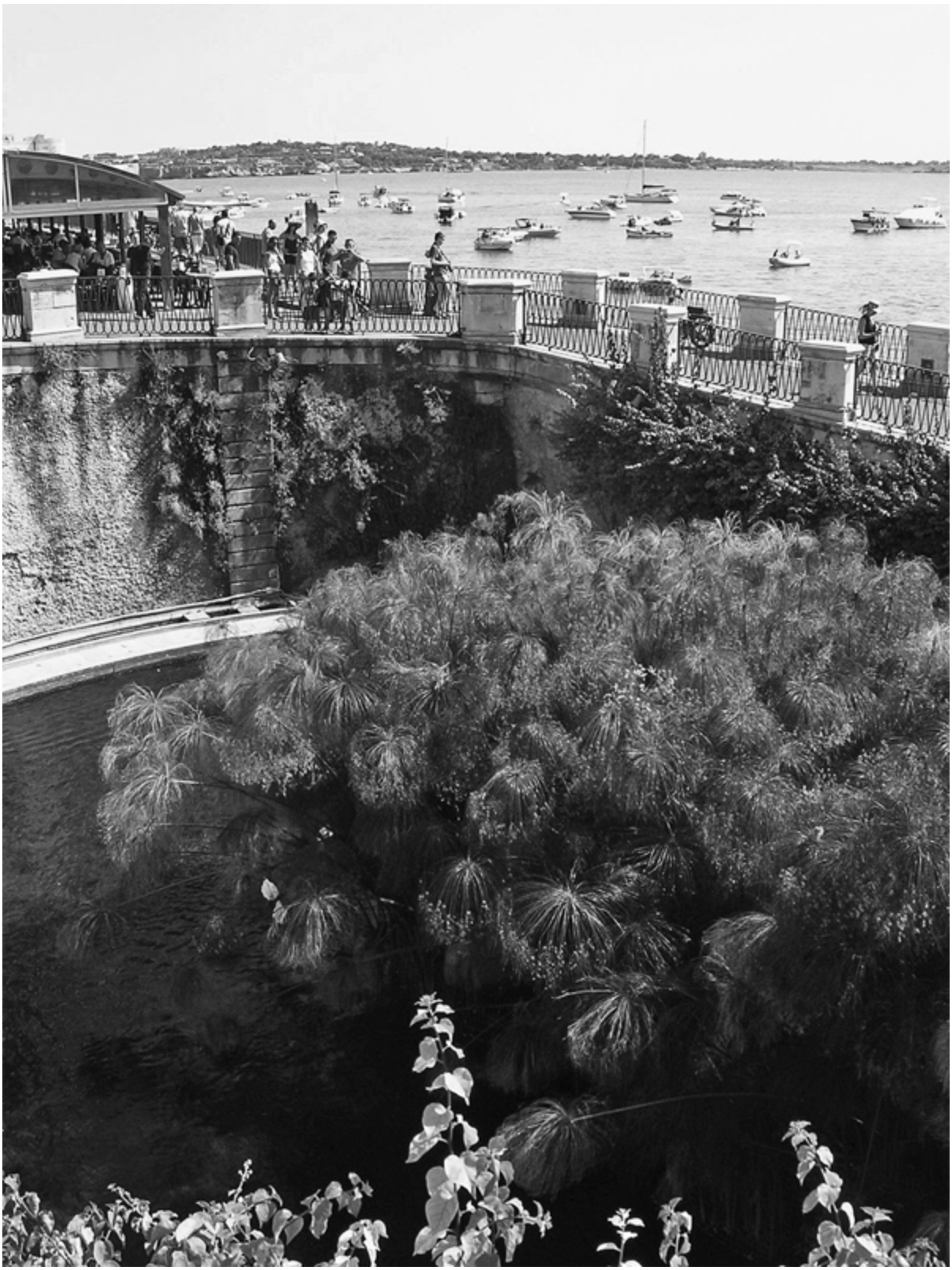

FIGURE 38.1 The Arethousa freshwater spring on the island of Ortygia, Syracuse, in close proximity to the sea (photo: G. Shepherd).

The spring was also mentioned in the foundation oracle as recorded by Pausanias (5.7.3; see also Pind. *Nem.* 1.1 and Ibyc. fr. 21 Diehl), and at some point was given further significance through a link to Olympia: in the same passage Pausanias recounts the myth of the hunter Alpheios chasing Arethousa, who escaped only when Artemis turned her into a spring and Alpheios into the river at Olympia. The spring and river met under the sea: assertions recorded by Strabo (6.2.4) that the spring ran red with the blood from sacrifices at Olympia and that a cup thrown into the Alpheios would resurface in the spring on Ortygia were produced in proof of this. Such claims of a direct physical link might well have been forged in the context of Syracusan interest in the cult of Zeus Olympios and Western Greek activity at Olympia in general (see further 'Delphi and Olympia' below). Elsewhere, other minor deities or claims of mythical events were liberally sprinkled across the landscape, such as Gela's river god, Gelas, who appeared on coins (Dunbabin 1948: 178), or the assertion that the fountain of Cyane near Syracuse was the site of the rape of Persephone, as was—perhaps later—Enna (Diod. Sic. 4.23.4, 5.3.2, 5.4.1–2; Dunbabin 1948: 180).

Oikist Cult

A regular addition to a Western Greek pantheon may have been a cult of the *oikist* (Malkin 1987: 189–266). The *oikist*, as leader of the settlement party, seems to have had a religious role which entailed obtaining an oracle from Delphi, laying out sanctuaries, and the reward of an honorific cult after he died. Evidence for *oikist* cults is scanty; the argument that they were a general feature of new settlements rests mainly on allusions in Herodotos (6.38), to sacrifices due to state founders, and on Thucydides (5.11.1), who describes the burial of Brasidas in the *agora* of Amphipolis, his adoption as city founder, and consequent heroic worship. This element of a heroic burial in the *agora* and a focal point for a hero-cult is reiterated by the scholion on Pindar (*Ol*. 1.149 (= 93)), which notes 'founders were buried in the centre of poleis according to custom'.

For the Greek West, the best evidence is a fragment of Callimachus (*Aet*. 2.43), which lists a number of Sicilian states (including Gela, Leontinoi, and Megara (Hyblaia)), followed by the observation that 'no

one whoever once built a wall for any of these cities comes to its customary feast without being named', and an explanation for why Zankle presents an exception to this rule. The implication of this passage is that an annual festival commemorating the foundation of the city and its founder was a regular feature across Greek Sicily at least. This annual commemoration might also have served to preserve other aspects of foundation history, including foundation stories and chronology (see further Dunbabin 1948: 11 and Malkin 1987: 197–8). Through a cult of the *oikist*, individual settlements could acquire a cult that was unique to that city and which emphasized the formulation of a new and independent state (Malkin 1987: 200; cf. Dunbabin 1948).

Archaeologically, the most compelling piece of evidence for *oikist* cults is the foot of an early fifth-century Attic kylix, found on the acropolis at Gela and bearing the inscription *Manisthales anetheke Antiphamoi* ('Manistheles dedicated me to Antiphemos'). Antiphemos was the Rhodian *oikist* of Gela (Thuc. 6.4.3). Otherwise, the evidence is more tenuous, but relates mainly to possible shrines in agoras, although actual tombs are more elusive. One interpretation of the mysterious sixth-century *heröon* or 'underground shrine' (Figure 38.2) at Poseidonia (which contained iron spits, bronze vessels, and a late sixth-century Athenian black-figure hydria), is that it was a cenotaph for the founder of Sybaris, whence the Troizenian settlers of Poseidonia purportedly came (Pedley 1990: 38–9). At Selinus, an enclosed precinct (approx. 6.7 × 8.6m) in the *agora* contained a sarcophagus-like structure of carefully joined stone slabs; while there is unfortunately no evidence for its date or purpose, an obvious interpretation is of a *heröon* containing the grave or cenotaph of the *oikist* of Selinus (Mertens 2006: 178). At Megara Hyblaia 'building d' on the west border of the *agora* is neither a tomb nor a cenotaph (the *oikist* Lamis died at Thapsos (Thuc. 6.4.1), where a reused Bronze Age Sikel chamber tomb may be his grave: Orsi 1895: 103–4), but is clearly a cult site and has been tentatively identified as an *oikist heröon* (Gras, Tréziny, and Broise 2004: 419).

FIGURE 38.2 The sixth-century ‘underground shrine’ at Poseidonia (Paestum), thought to be in or near the original Greek *agora* of the city (photo: G. Shepherd).

Olympian Gods

As far as major cults and the Olympian gods are concerned, there is some evidence to suggest that even where overlaps in cult occurred between historical founder states and settlements in Magna Graecia, there was some adjustment of the city pantheon to ensure the differences of prominence and cultic status which likewise distinguished the religious spectra of other Greek poleis. The comparison of Syracuse with her historical mother-city Corinth provides an interesting case study in this respect.

Both cities had early and important temples dedicated to Apollo, both of which occupied conspicuous positions. However, although at Corinth the Apollo temple was pre-eminent (on its identification, see Bookidis and

Stroud 2004), at Syracuse Apollo was arguably relegated to a slightly lower position. The temple was built near the isthmus on Ortygia, and was obvious to anyone approaching or departing the island, but did not, in fact, occupy the highest and more central position. This was the focus of a cult from as early as the eighth century BCE, and was home to a succession of religious structures culminating in the fifth-century Temple of Athena (Voza 1999). Only a few metres away and parallel to the Athena temple was a monumental Ionic temple, possibly not completed, but begun in the late sixth century BCE (Figure 38.3).

FIGURE 38.3 The Piazza Minerva, Siracusa (Syracuse): on the left is the fifth-century Temple of Athena, now the cathedral of Siracusa (the temple steps and columns are still visible on the exterior); on the right, the black lines on the pavement mark out the position of the Ionic temple.

The attribution of this temple is uncertain, but one candidate is Artemis, on the basis of Cicero's reference (*Verr*. 4.53.118) to two splendid Temples

of Diana (Artemis) and Minerva (Athena) on Ortygia. Alternatively, Apollo may have had to share his temple with Artemis (Cultrera 1971, esp. 704; cf. Dinsmoor 1950: 75 with n. 2, who thinks the Artemis temple was elsewhere on Ortygia). Outside the main city, Artemis also had sanctuaries at Scala Greca and Belvedere, and a presence in the Achradina Demeter and Kore sanctuary by the Classical period (Fischer-Hansen 2009: 2010–14). Overall, Artemis seems to have been more prominent than in Corinth (Fischer-Hansen 2009: 214); Apollo perhaps rather less so; and, as Dunbabin (1948: 177) observed, two of the most important goddesses of Corinth—Hera and Aphrodite—were given little attention in Syracuse.

Another important cult at Syracuse was that of Zeus Olympios, for which there is only rather limited and late tenuous evidence at Corinth (Paus. 2.5.5 and 3.9.2; Theophr. *Caus. pl*. 5.14.2; see Dinsmoor 1949 on possible links to architectural elements found at the north edge of Corinth; cf. Pfaff 2003: 115–19). In Syracuse this cult was sufficiently prominent by the mid-sixth century BCE to warrant the construction of a monumental extra-urban temple overlooking the Great Harbour. Here we may see yet another route by which city-states in the West could acquire particular religious profiles: the promotion of family or private cults to state level. For Syracuse, this might have been due to the efforts of the ancestors of one Hagesias, a friend of Hieron I of Syracuse. Hagesias' ancestry is detailed in Pindar's *Olympian* 6, where he is described as a member of the prophetic family of the Iamidai of Olympia and also as *synoikister* (co-founder). The latter term might refer to collaboration with Hieron (Diod. Sic. 11.49.1, 66, 76.3; Pind. *Ol*. 6 suggests that Hieron persuaded Hagesias to emigrate from Arcadia to Syracuse; see Fisher forthcoming), but it prompted a scholiast's note (Schol. Vet. *Ol*. 6.6 8a) that Hagesias was descended from Iamidai who accompanied the *oikist* Archias to Syracuse. If so, then they and/or their descendants may have been responsible for the establishment and promotion of the cult of Zeus Olympios at Syracuse, and possibly also the cults of Arethousa and Artemis Alpheioa (Weniger 1915).

Private to State

Further evidence for the escalation of private cults to state level comes from Gela and Selinus. According to Herodotos (7.153), Telines, an ancestor of Gelon (tyrant of Gela and a Denomenid) managed to negotiate the return of Geloans who had taken refuge in Maktorion following civil unrest (late seventh century?) through sacred objects of the cult of Demeter and Kore. In securing the deal, Telines made it a condition that his descendants should be priests of the cult; Herodotos was uncertain as to how Telines had acquired the objects, but the scholiast on Pindar's *Pythian Ode* 2.27b (Drachmann) notes that the cult was brought to Gela by the first Deinomenes. This suggests that Telines' achievement was the promotion of a family cult to state level. Certainly the cult was very prominent in Gela, notably at the Bitalemi sanctuary just outside the city. Gelon might also have had both family and state interests in mind when, upon taking control of Syracuse, he established twin temples to Demeter and Kore there (White 1964: 261–7; cf. Bookidis 2003: 248–51 for evidence for an early Corinthian source for the cult).

At Selinus, the *lex sacra* (see 'Transfer of Cult' above) refers to sacrifices to Zeus Melichios *en myskos*, translatable as 'in the plot of Myskos'; this, together with a similar reference to *en euthydamo* ('in the plot of Euthydamos') is interpreted by the editors of the inscription as the names of men belonging to prominent gentilitial groups which, like others in the Greek world, had a family cult of Zeus Melichios. However, whereas at Megara and elsewhere the cult of Zeus Melichios was usually a private or family one, at Selinus the precinct of Zeus Melichios, west of the city near the sanctuary of Demeter Malaphoros, suggests that the cult extended to the wider community (Jameson, Jordan, and Kotansky 1993: esp. 7 and 28–9, with references).

One factor which may have played a very active part in supplying and promoting cults other than those directly transferable from the historical mother-city, or which could be created upon settlement like the *oikist* cult, is the presence of individuals and groups that traced their origins to different parts of Greece. The Iamidai at Syracuse, discussed previously, might present one such case. Dunbabin (1948: 183) suspected that for settlements like Metaponto in South Italy, which lacked clear traditions of origin, but which also had a 'wide range of unusual cults', this might be the explanation. In fact, given more recent views on the likely derivation of settlers and indeed later arrivals—that they are unlikely, on practical

demographic grounds, to have all come from the mother-cities named in the literary sources (Snodgrass 1994: 2)—this explanation may well have more widespread application.

Indigenous Influences

It is likely that these mixed populations included individuals deriving from the indigenous populations of Sicily and South Italy. Although earlier scholars were reluctant to accept the presence of Sicilians or Italians in Greek settlements in any context beyond slavery, more recent views accept that cohabitation and intermarriage are likely to have occurred, despite the difficulties in identifying such individuals in the archaeological record (for discussion, and references to scholarship, see Shepherd 2005b). Whatever the precise realities of the situation, interaction with local communities and the influence of local religion are clearly important potential factors in the development of Greek religion in the West.

A difficulty here is our lack of information regarding the nature of religion in Sicily and South Italy before the arrival of the Greeks. There is a striking dearth of sites that can be unequivocally identified as religious or cultic in nature: the assumption must be that, prior to Greek settlement, indigenous religion had little or no material manifestation. Such cult sites as are archaeologically identifiable become obvious only in periods post-dating the arrival of the Greeks, and can include Greek-style structures and Greek objects as votive offerings. This is the case at the sanctuary of the twin gods, the Palikoi (mod. Rocchicella di Mineo; Diod. Sic. 11.88.6–11.89), in south-eastern Sicily: although there are traces of occupation dating back as far as the Palaeolithic period and including Late Bronze Age tombs, evidence for cultic use dates only to the seventh century BCE at best, and most is fifth century and later (Maniscalco and McConnell 2003). It might reasonably be asked whether the concept of making non-perishable (and often minor) offerings to a deity might not be a cultural practice derived from the Greeks.

The idea that a pre-existing indigenous cult site might have prompted syncretism or the establishment of a Greek cult on the same site has often been put forward as an explanation and rationale for the choice of a sanctuary location (for discussion and references, see Malkin 1987, esp.

160–3). Unfortunately, even where evidence of indigenous activity does pre-date a Greek cult site, there are problems both in chronological continuity and in identifying the earlier remains as religious rather than, say, domestic in nature. Two sanctuaries of Demeter—the Bitalemi sanctuary at Gela and the S. Biagio sanctuary at Akragas—were both originally reported to have produced indigenous pottery dating between the eighth and sixth centuries BCE, as well as Protocorinthian and Corinthian pottery (Orsi 1906: 595 ff.; Marconi 1933: 50). For the former, subsequent excavation identified a lack of material of the first half of the seventh century (Orlandini 1966: esp. 17–27); for the latter, it is possible that Late Corinthian pieces were misidentified as Protocorinthian (Dunbabin 1948: 307 with n. 3; Siracusano 1983: 73). In both cases there is no clear evidence of continuity of use, nor indeed that the sites were always religious in nature.

That said, there is some evidence that indigenous religion not only survived, but also that it was of interest to the Greeks. Later references to cults of a goddess Hyblaia (Paus. 5.23.6; see further Dunbabin 1948: 144–5); Hadranus (a fire-god identified with Hephaistos: Ael. *NA* 11.3); and the Palikoi attest to this, while the prominence of Demeter and Kore in Sicily is not only explained in terms of their relevance to the agricultural wealth of the island, but also possible syncretism with an indigenous chthonic deity (Diod. Sic. 5.2.3–3.2; Pace 1945: 469; cf. Zuntz 1971: 72–3). Many aspects of this influence may well have been of an irrecoverable nature, perhaps involving shifts in belief and myth, or alterations and additions to ritual. Polybios (12.5.10) describes one such case at Locri in South Italy: the Locrians (having expelled the Sikels) reportedly adopted several Sikel rites where they had no inherited tradition of their own. However, this was not without careful adaptation: for the leader of sacrificial processions, the Locrians substituted a noble virgin for the Sikel well-born youth, on the grounds of the unusual Locrian custom of matrilineal nobility.

Although signs of local influence on Greek cult are few, difficult to detect, and oblique rather than direct, there is another important arena in which such influence might be a factor and which arguably also presents another manifestation of religious independence on the part of the Western Greeks: temple design. As noted in the ‘Introduction’ of this chapter, Sicily and South Italy are littered with the remains of splendid temples

that, while recognizably Greek, cannot be mistaken for the products of Greece.

TEMPLES IN MAGNA GRAECIA

Current scholarship on the development of Greek architecture holds that the Greeks who first settled in Sicily and South Italy in the later eighth century BCE did not take with them any tradition of monumental temple architecture. Rather, what ultimately became the Classical Greek temple built in stone, and its associated orders, was formulated over the course of the seventh century BCE. It reached full expression by the early sixth century BCE, notably in such early Doric structures as the Temple of Artemis on Corfu and the Temple of Hera at Olympia.

Channels of architectural communication were clearly open, since developments either side of the Ionian Sea were far from independent: the essential ground plan, elevation, and orders (including a preference for the Doric order) are the same in both Greece and Magna Graecia. In this context it is significant that the earlier date now proposed for the Temple of Apollo at Syracuse—*c*.600 BCE rather than *c*.570 BCE—not only extends its priority over the Temple of Apollo in Corinth, but also places it amongst the very earliest monumental temples with a stone colonnade. An intriguing feature of the temple is the inscription across the top front step: although its reading has been much debated, it seems likely that it refers to one Kleomenes in the role of a wealthy contractor or donor, and probably one with social and even political ambitions (Figure 38.4). A parallel might be provided by the inscription on the mid-sixth century BCE Temple A2 at Metaponto, which vaunts ‘to himself and his *genos* (clan)’, and has been interpreted as referring to the local tyrant. In the West, the ambitions of the wealthy might have been more thinly veiled when it came to temple building (Shepherd forthcoming).

FIGURE 38.4 The Temple of Apollo (Syracuse), with the remains of the double colonnade at the entrance. The inscription is just visible along the top step: the letters ΚΛ are clearest, under the

left-hand column (photo: G. Shepherd).

Construction

Although in the past Western Greek temple architecture has often been damned as crude and imitative—Dinsmoor (1950: 75) famously denounced its 'barbaric distortions'—the Apollo temple at Syracuse indicates that monumental architecture in the West was highly innovative from a very early stage, and architects there were at the forefront of its development. Certainly, its later development did not exactly parallel that of the mainland, and in many respects, including engineering, investment, and decoration, may even have led the way. As in Ionia, at the eastern end of the Greek world, sixth-century architects in the West were building temples on a colossal scale, notably Temple GT at Selinus and the Temple of Zeus Olympios at Akragas; although such a venture was attempted in Peisistratid Athens, whether for reasons of resources, politics, or motivation, it was abandoned before the structure was completed.

Other features of scale, such as the tendency to greater unsupported roof spans in Western structures, might point to better resources such as heavier timber for beams (Coulton 1977: 158), but equally might indicate more sophisticated roofing systems such as the truss (Hodge 1960: 38–44); it has been argued that Sicilian roofing systems influenced those in Greece (Klein 1998). Different solutions to architectural problems were also preferred in the West: for example, the inevitable problem of positioning triglyphs over corner columns was usually solved by stretching the metopes in the West; it was not until *c*.480 BCE that the angle contraction employed in mainland Greece throughout the sixth century BCE became a regular feature (Coulton 1974: 72–82; 1977: 62).

In plan and elevation, Western temples also display a distinct local style throughout the sixth century BCE and down to at least 480 BCE, conspicuous in three main features: wide flank colonnades in relation to the width of the *cella* (main room); a tendency towards elongation with higher numbers of flank columns (often sixteen or seventeen); and, in part contributing to the latter factor, frontal emphasis created by a deeper and/or more elaborate arrangement of the *pronaos* (front porch), while the rear of the *cella* was closed by a plain *adyton* (back room) rather than the

opisthodomos (back porch) which usually balanced the *pronaos* on mainland temples (Winter 1976: 140). The Temples of Apollo at Syracuse and Corinth provide good comparisons in these last respects: the former had a peristyle of 6 x 17 columns, which incorporated a double front colonnade as well as a two-columned porch and a blank *adyton* (see Figure 38.4); the Corinth temple had a colonnade of 6 x 15 columns, and both *pronaos* and *opisthodomos* had two columns.

Other oddities occur more than once also: internal staircases appear in several Western Greek temples, notably in pairs in the Temples of Concord (*c*.430 BCE) and Herakles (*c*.500 BCE) at Akragas, Athena at Paestum (*c*.510 BCE), and Victory at Himera (*c*.480 BCE), where they are located on either side of the entrance to the *cella*. These seem unnecessarily elaborate for simple access to the roof space for maintenance: it has been suggested that they relate to the use of the attic for storage (and even display), or for ritual ascents and descents (Hodge 1960: 37–8; Miles 1985). Winter (1976: 140) suggested that the wide colonnades might reflect their greater use for cult purposes, especially in Sicily. The regular incorporation of an *adyton* might likewise reflect Western Greek approaches to rituals; certainly the highly unusual enclosed colonnades of Temple F (Selinus) and the Temple of Zeus Olympios (Akragas), where screen walls stretched between the columns, suggest quite distinctive cult practices (Dinsmoor 1950: 99, 101). The possibility that this also reflects some indigenous impact on ritual should not be discounted.

Locations

In addition to some details of their construction, Western Greek temples are also notable for their location and number. Their placement in the grid patterns that distinguish the layout of the cities of Magna Graecia indicate that they were positioned for both practicality and maximum visibility (Malkin 1987: 164–86), and they regularly appear in multiples and often in close proximity to each other (Figure 38.5).

FIGURE 38.5 The Temples of Hera II ('Temple of Neptune', mid-fifth century BCE) in the foreground and Hera I ('The Basilica', mid-sixth century BCE) in the background, in close proximity at Poseidonia (Paestum); compare also Figure 38.3 (photo: G. Shepherd).

In these respects, not only did the sacred landscapes of the West look very different from those of the mainland, but they also testify to what must have been a potent, if expensive, form of rivalry between competing city-states. The total *ensemble* of monumental temples in each city—six at Selinus and at least four at Akragas alone by the end of fifth century BCE—presents an extraordinary degree of urban ostentation that largely preceded similar efforts elsewhere, such as in Periklean Athens.

The increasing scale of individual temples suggests close attention was paid to the construction activities of rivals in an effort to outdo them in the architectural sphere as in others (Snodgrass 1986: 55–6). The earliest peripteral temple at Selinus (Temple C, *c*.550 BCE) outstripped both early temples at Syracuse (Apollo and Zeus Olympios) in the dimensions of the stylobate and column height; it, in turn, was surpassed by the Temple of

Herakles at Akragas. While the inspiration for the colossal temples at Selinus (GT) and Akragas (Zeus Olympios) may well have come from the earlier Ionic versions in Ionia, the dimensions of the two Sicilian edifices —almost identical in length, but over 2 metres wider for the slightly later Akragas temple—show that local competition could be fierce. An increase in length might have been less noticeable on such a huge building, but such an increase in width, together with taller columns and a higher entablature, not to mention the monolithic effect of the screen wall, must have made the Akragas temple the clear front-runner, even though neither temple was actually finished. One cannot help but suspect that, towards the end of the sixth century BCE, someone from Akragas paid a visit to Selinus with a tape-measure in hand.

Sculpture

Given the size, grandeur, and number of temples in the West, one category of evidence is surprisingly rare in the sanctuaries: sculpture. This applies both to architectural and free-standing works. For the former, there are some well-known groups of metopes—interestingly, they appear to be concentrated at particular sites—such as those from Temples C, FS, Y (all Archaic) and E (early Classical) at Selinus, of which several survive in a good state from each temple. The most extensive cycle comes from the 'Treasury' of the Heraion at Foce del Sele outside Poseidonia, and to these may be added the metopes from the temple, but thus far the three great temples of Poseidonia itself seem to have lacked any sculptural decoration (Ridgway 1977: 239, 243; Pedley 1990: 49). This lack is especially curious given that the early date of the Foce del Sele 'Treasury' metopes (and, indeed, those from Temple C at Selinus) might well support Ridgway's (1977: 248) suggestion that sculpted metopes were invented in the West—another instance of Western Greek innovation. Gorgon images were favoured to some degree, perhaps over the narrative cycles that were increasingly common in Greece. Examples include the terracotta pedimental gorgon of Temple C (Selinus) and the gorgon metopes adorning the sixth-century BCE Temple of Athena in Syracuse. Most surviving sculptural decoration is metopal rather than pedimental, although variations could be highly unusual, such as the enormous *telamon*

figures on the Temple of Zeus at Akragas, which contribute much to distinguishing this temple from more canonical structures.

There is even less evidence for the free-standing sculptures that might justifiably be expected as ostentatious dedications in the sanctuaries. Much, of course, could have been taken (the Romans, especially the rapacious Verres, are always suspects here), but we should still expect to find some evidence of their existence in the form of statue bases and inscriptions. Occasionally some rather unimpressive fixings have been found, such as the range of thirteen limestone stelai found in the vicinity of the sixth-century BCE Temple of Athena in Syracuse which the excavator Paolo Orsi (1918) suggested originally supported bronze or marble sculptures, on the grounds of cuttings in their top surfaces. Other works, such as the draped *kouros* from Syracuse, may have been displayed in sanctuaries (its original location is unknown), but many of the relatively few pieces of free-standing sculpture in the West derive from cemeteries, not sanctuaries.

MAGNA GRAECIA AND GREECE: RELIGIOUS INTERACTION

Delphi and Olympia

In contrast to the sanctuaries in Magna Graecia, lavish dedications from the Western Greek states are well known in mainland Greece, at least from the Panhellenic sanctuaries (see also, in this volume, Scott, Chapter 16). The bronze Delphi Charioteer dedicated to commemorate the chariot race victory of Polyzalos of Gela in either 478 or 474 BCE, is probably the best known, but others, such as Gelon's tripod (Diod. Sic. 11.26.7), also demonstrate Deinomenid interest in Delphi. Amongst other Western Greek offerings are Selinus' gold branch of the celery plant from which the city took its name (Plut. *De Pyth. or*. 12), and the relatively late Syracusan Treasury (Paus. 10.11.5). At Olympia, dedications appear even more numerous and also of greater antiquity: smaller-scale objects dating to the

eighth and seventh centuries BCE and deriving from Italy and/or Sicily include fibulae and other jewellery, armour, and weaponry, and account for at least 8.9 per cent of all foreign dedications (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985). The Western Greeks are the most likely candidates as the donors, and some votives, such as the four spearheads of a type common in Sicily (similar to a find from the Syracusan Athenaion) seem likely to have advertised a Greek victory in an encounter with the local population to a very wide audience at Olympia (Snodgrass 1964: 128–9).

Larger Western Greek dedications at Olympia are helpfully listed by Pausanias (Books 5 and 6, *passim*) and include *inter alia* a Zeus statue, 'an offering of the people of Metapontum' (5.22.5) and a dedication of plunder by the people of Akragas from their war with Motya (5.25.5). The most conspicuous dedications were, of course, the treasuries: five of the twelve structures along the treasury terrace are identified as Western Greek dedications by Pausanias, with a possible sixth, if the 'Megarian' Treasury is in fact the 'Megara Hyblaian Treasury' (Boardman 1978: 160; Morgan 1999: 419).

Mother-Cities

The Western Greeks clearly identified Olympia and Delphi as the best destinations for objects and structures designed to advertise their successes and prosperity. But what of ongoing communication in the religious arena between Western Greek states and their historical mother-cities, as opposed to the wider platform of the Panhellenic sanctuaries? Amongst the contributing factors to the view that the Western settlements duplicated inheritable pantheons are the passages in Thucydides (1.25.4 and 1.38.2–4) which refer to common festival gatherings and due respect paid to Corinth by her colonies. The comments are made in the context of Corinthian annoyance that Corcyra, unlike other Corinthian colonies, did not in the fifth century observe Corinthian precedence. Since Corcyra, like Syracuse, was founded in the later eighth century these passages are often taken to reflect not only universal, ongoing religious relationships between founding cities and their offspring, but also the antiquity of such relationships and their existence from the earliest stages of Greek ventures overseas and throughout the Archaic period.

There is scattered evidence, especially from Classical and later inscriptions, that elsewhere in the Greek world some foundations were required to maintain a relationship with their mother-cities through religion, including participation in festivals and dedications. However, it is questionable whether such a relationship can really be applied to the early settlements and to Syracuse in particular. Other Corinthian settlements—such as Leukas, Ambrakia, and Anaktorion—were founded later, under the tyrants. They had a greater degree of political connection, including *oikist*s who were the tyrants' sons (Graham 1984), and that may well have been articulated through religious rites; they were also geographically closer, which would have facilitated greater interaction. The situation of Syracuse and Corcyra was rather different, since both were politically independent from foundation. In addition, Syracuse's short-lived fifth-century democracy was preceded by the tyranny of the Deinominids of Gela and, following Gelon's reported programme of resettlement, the city would also have had numerous inhabitants with no nostalgic ties to Corinth. It seems unlikely that, in the fifth century, there would have been any reason for Syracuse to maintain a subservient relationship through religion with Corinth. The fact that Corcyra was singled out as behaving badly, and had obviously been doing so for some time (Hdt. 3.49), might have had more to do with possible formalities put in place when that island was under the domination of the Corinthian tyrant Periander (making Corycra more like the other tyrant colonies), than with any original arrangement that can be universally applied even to the earlier Archaic foundations.

The evidence for dedication at mother-city sanctuaries, especially of the non-perishable variety, is also of interest in this context. In comparison with that from the Panhellenic sanctuaries discussed ('Delphi and Olympia'), it is for the most part an argument *ex silentio*. Nevertheless, there are indications that, if an ongoing relationship existed, it was sporadic and strategic rather than continuous and regularly observed.

Surviving artefacts at mother-city sanctuaries which can be securely linked with Magna Graecia can be described as negligible in number or even non-existent. At Perachora, 'Italian' objects include twenty-seven fibulae, some of the 'bone-and-amber' type for which there is now evidence for manufacture at Pithekoussai. Yet exotic objects found at Perachora are mainly Phoenician in origin, and if the interpretation of the sanctuary as a stopping-off point for sailors on their way to Corinth and as

the recipient of offerings for a safe sea journey is correct, as seems eminently feasible, then the relatively few 'Italian' objects need have no greater significance than convenient objects acquired by traders (Payne 1962: 25).

The best evidence for dedications passing between Western Greece and the homeland comes from Rhodes. Here, at the Sanctuary of Athena Lindia, Blinkenberg was surprised to find so few traces of the Western Greeks, given the existence of Gela and Akragas in Sicily. Again, finds were confined to a sprinkling of fibulae, and the eleven that Blinkenberg discovered fade into insignificance when placed in the context of the total of 1592 fibulae of identifiable type which he reported; fibulae were clearly a standard offering at Lindos (Blinkenberg 1931: 71, 75–6). However, more substantial offerings from Gela and Akragas purportedly dedicated at Lindos in the Archaic period are recorded in the Hellenistic inscription known as the Lindian Chronicle.

Evidence from the Lindian Chronicle

The Lindian Chronicle was composed by Timachidas, son of Hagestimos (probably identical with the author Timachidas of Rhodes) and Tharsagoras, son of Stratos in the early first century BCE. It lists offerings made from before the Trojan War to those dedicated by Philip V of Macedon (238–179 BCE). Fears about the imaginative nature of this document—at least as regards the earlier dedications—are not allayed by the likelihood that many votives were destroyed in the temple fire of the mid-fourth century BCE, nor that the information relating to Sicily was gleaned from the Hellenistic historian Xenagoras, a dubious source. As such, the Chronicle probably says more about how the Rhodians wanted to present their past in the Hellenistic period, and particularly in the face of the escalating power of Rome, than it does about the realities of dedication in earlier periods. As Shaya (2005: 435) points out, Roman offerings known from other sources are conspicuous by their absence, and their omission might be read as an attempt at cultural defiance.

However, while they are not beyond the bounds of specious invention, the Sicilian dedications described do sound plausible for the periods claimed for them. If, for a moment, we suspend scepticism and take the

Chronicle at face value, then it still may provide interesting insights into the ways in which religious relationships between mother-cities and Greek states abroad may have worked. The five dedications in question range from the seventh to the late sixth or early fifth century BCE. The three from Gela are a *krater* dedicated upon the conquest of Ariaitos in the seventh century, a town of unknown location (*LC* 25.11–14); a wooden gorgon with a stone face dedicated by Deinomenes (according to the inscription the Deinomenes who arrived at Gela with the *oikist* Antiphemos, but possibly confused with the later Deinomenes, Gelon's father (*LC* 27.29–35)); and *daidaleia* (wooden statues) dedicated by an uncle of the tyrant Hippokrates (*LC* 31.60–4). From Akragas came a *krater* dedicated by the sixth-century tyrant Phalaris and purportedly made by Daidalos (*LC* 27) and a statue of Athena, part of the spoils from a victory over Minoa (*LC* 30). As dedications either commemorating military victories, or made by tyrants or other prominent individuals, these look more like the sort of calculated and programmatic dedications that were made at Olympia and Delphi than a reflection of an regular and continuous relationship based on pious and nostalgic connections—although, no doubt, the familial links added an extra edge to the declarations of success.

CONCLUSION

While religion in Magna Graecia had many features in common with the nature and practice of religion in mainland Greece, it was not a simple case of the duplication of cults and rituals transferred from the various homelands of the Greek migrants. Rather, Western Greek states manipulated their cultic preferences and customized their practices to forge distinctive religious profiles that contributed to the individual cultural identities of those city-states, just as comparable arrangements did for other Greek states.

In the cities of Magna Graecia the traditional gods could be maintained, promoted, or sidelined; minor deities such as *oikist*s and other local heroes could be installed; prominent families could further their interests through the promulgation of their own cults; and local indigenous deities and

practices may well have been drawn upon for inspiration. The paraphernalia of religion—temples and dedications—could be used not just for pious purposes, but also competitively in displays of prosperity and success to the widest possible audience. These distinctive features of religion in Magna Graecia,which, from the fifth century onwards, also included the religious movements of Orphism and Pythagoreanism (see, in this volume, Edmonds, Chapter 37), demonstrate that while the religion of the Western Greeks fitted comfortably under the very broad umbrella of 'Greek religion', it was nevertheless far from being a replica of the religion of the Greek mainland.

Suggested Reading

Although it is now over sixty years old and in some respects outdated, Dunbabin 1948 remains a fundamental text for the study of any aspect of the Greek West, including religion, not least because of its thorough knowledge of the ancient sources. Much has, of course, also been written on religion in Italian, including Pace's (1945) classic study (see esp. 723–30 for details of dedications at Olympia and Delphi); other more recent works include the collected papers in Anello, Martorana, and Sammartano 2006.

On religion and the colonization process (in particular *oikist* cults), see Malkin 1987 and Dougherty 1993 (especially on 'murderous founders'). For sanctuary architecture, Mertens 2006 is very important and is also made more widely accessible via its Italian translation; see also de Polignac 1995 and Malkin 1987 on sanctuary location. Studies of Western Greek sculpture tend to be embedded in broader works (such as Ridgway 1977), but see also Boardman 1995 and Holloway 1975 for succinct treatments; for the relationship between art and cultural identity, see Marconi's study (2007) of the metopes from Selinus. On relations between mother-cities and colonies in general across the Greek world, Graham 1984 (first edition 1964) is still very important; for religious relations, see further Shepherd 2000; and on the Lindian Chronicle specifically, Higbie 2003 and Shaya 2005.

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CHAPTER 39

THE NORTHERN BLACK SEA: THE CASE OF THE BOSPORAN KINGDOM

MAYA MURATOV

INTRODUCTION

THE Northern Black Sea littoral (Figure 39.1) is often considered a political and cultural entity and is treated as such in scholarship. In fact, it is comprised of three rather distinct (both geographically and historically) areas: the region of Olbia and its environs in the north-western Black Sea; Chersonese, its *chora*, and the western Crimea; and finally the Bosporan Kingdom, located in the eastern Crimea and the Taman Peninsula, which is the focus of this chapter.

These three areas differed in their political and cultural developments, in particular in their relationships with the local people and nomadic tribes that were a constant presence. In scholarship, the Olbian state is perhaps best known for the cult of Achilles Pontarchos, the Master of Pontos, whose major temple was located on the nearby island of Leuke (Hommel

1980; Rusyaeva 2003; Hupe 2006). Although some evidence for Achilles' cult was also found in Chersonese, the latter is generally recognized as the cult centre of Parthenos, a maiden goddess, identified with Artemis and Iphigenia, and the main protectress of the city (Guldager Bilde 2009).

This chapter explores certain religious traditions of the Bosporan Kingdom (Figure 39.1), from the foundation of the *apoikiai* (new settlements, literally, 'home away from home') sometime in the first half of the sixth century through the mid-first centuries BCE, that is, through the death of Mithridates VI. Although this region is gradually becoming recognized as an important, albeit distant, part of the Greek *oikoumene* (inhabited universe), it remains far from being well represented in scholarship. Following a brief historical overview of the area, this chapter will first address some of the cults practised over the course of five centuries on the *temenos* (the sacred area of the city) and the acropolis of Pantikapaion, the capital of the Bosporan Kingdom. The section 'Bosporan Topography, Cult Places, and Religious Beliefs' will examine associations between the chthonian sanctuaries and the unusual features of the local landscape, namely the mud volcanoes. In both cases, it will focus on the newly discovered archaeological data and will present some new interpretations of the older material.

FIGURE 39.1 Greek colonies in the Northern Black Sea, *c*.450 BCE.
Map adapted from MapMaster CC BY-SA 3.0.

In the late seventh–early sixth century BCE, when most of the Mediterranean had already been settled, the Greeks turned their attention to the Black Sea and founded numerous *apoikiai* on its shores, thus turning it, so to speak, into a 'Greek pond'. We are concerned here with the northern shore. By the second quarter of the sixth century BCE, a number of Greek colonies (mostly Milesian) were founded on both sides of the Kerch Straits, known in antiquity as the Cimmerian Bosporos. Initially politically independent, these *apoikiai* were united into some sort of polity around 480 BCE (Diod. Sic. 12.31). Thus the Bosporan Kingdom was created, with Pantikapaion, the main city of the European Bosporos, as its capital. Starting in the late fifth century BCE, the neighbouring territories, with their non-Greek populations, were gradually added to this dominion. Eventually, the population of the Kingdom comprised the Greeks from Ionia and from other cities around the Black and Mediterranean Seas, and various indigenous tribes, known to us from literary and epigraphic sources. The Bosporan Kingdom was one of the early examples of a state with a mixed population of Greeks and barbarians, featuring, at least until

the early centuries CE, a thoroughly Hellenized, but nevertheless complex, cultural milieu.

Although the Bosporos remained ostensibly independent, it became a provincial satellite of Rome shortly after the death of Mithridates VI in 63 BCE. By 14 CE, Bosporan rulers adopted the dynastic names of Tiberii Iulii and began to style themselves 'friends of Caesar and of the Roman people', while apparently enjoying considerable independence in their domestic and foreign policy (Gajdukevitch 1971: 359). The prosperity of the Kingdom was ruined in the 230s–40s CE by an invasion of the Goths; the Huns, arriving in the 370s CE, delivered the final blow (Gajdukevitch 1971: 355).

GREEKS AND BARBARIANS

The concept of cultural, and especially religious, syncretism between the Greeks and barbarians remains one of the most hotly debated, yet practically insoluble, problems of scholarship dedicated to the Northern Black Sea. The idea that the Greek colonists came into close contact with the local population immediately after their arrival, and that strong mutual influences could be discerned as early as the late sixth century BCE, was common in Soviet scholarship and occasionally persists in recent Russian scholarship (Ustinova 1999; Shaub 2007). However, this viewpoint seems both too radical and too simplistic.

First and foremost, we know surprisingly little about the ethnic situation on both shores of the Bosporos. The general consensus is that these lands were scarcely populated, and that the Greek *apoikiai* were established in unoccupied areas. Archaeological investigations have not so far uncovered any archaeological remains immediately pre-dating Greek occupation. However, the names of the indigenous sedentary tribes living in the surrounding areas have come down to us from literary sources, such as Hekataios of Miletos, Herodotos, Strabo, Diodorus, and from the Bosporan inscriptions. Among these tribes, the Maiotians, traditionally placed along the eastern shore of the Azov Sea (ancient Maiotis), were, in all probability, not an *ethnos* but a group of tribes living there. At present,

about two hundred settlements have been identified within the territory associated with the Maiotians (Limberis and Marchenko 2010: 190). However, Maiotian material culture was rather unsophisticated, and we know virtually nothing about these people's religious beliefs. As for the other tribes mentioned—Toretoi, Dandarioi, Psessoi—their locations are completely unknown and they continue to remain 'archaeological phantoms'. The closest neighbours of the Greeks on the Taman Peninsula were the Sindians. At this point, only one settlement (Semibratnee or Labris) and its necropolis can be associated with them. Based on the poorly published results of limited excavations conducted in the 1950s, it seems that, by the second quarter of the fifth century, the Sindians were thoroughly Hellenized (Goroncharovskii and Ivantchik 2010: 224, 230).

In the eastern Crimea, traces of pre-Greek occupation have not been uncovered thus far and no indigenous tribes were or are associated with these lands. However, these territories might have been controlled from a distance. Because of their proximity to the Eurasian steppe belt, this area was subject to periodic influxes of nomadic tribes of Indo-Iranian stock, commonly referred to as Scythians. It does seem that, from very early on and throughout their existence, the Greek *apoikiai* had to interact with these nomadic Scythians. As recent archaeological investigations of the Bosporan cities testify, these encounters were often anything but peaceful (Tolstikov and Muratov 2013: 182–3).

Obviously, Greek settlers were not living in isolation, and constantly interacted with various non-Greeks as initial economic and political connections were forged. In due course, quite a few of these non-Greeks settled nearby, or even in the *apoikiai*, as some of their territories were incorporated into the Bosporan Kingdom. By approximately the early fourth century BCE, a new cultural identity—which might be called Bosporan—had developed. The Bosporan culture was Hellenic at its core, and Greek remained its *lingua franca* for both oral and written communications. Undoubtedly, Greek colonists had to adapt to the new surroundings, new climate, and their new neighbours. However, as the evidence demonstrates, what might be deemed to be 'barbarian influences' on the religion and material culture of the Greek *apoikiai* of the Bosporos are not detectable at all—at least, not until the first century CE, a time period that falls beyond the scope of this chapter.

THE *TEMENOS* AND ACROPOLIS OF PANTIKAPAION (SIXTH–FIRST CENTURIES BCE)

> Pantikapaion is the metropolis of the Bosporians and is situated at the mouth of Lake Maiotis. . . . Pantikapaion is a hill inhabited on all sides in circuit of twenty stadia. To the east it has a harbour, and docks for about 30 ships; and it also has an acropolis. (Strabo 7.4.4)

Located in the centre of the modern city of Kerch, on a large hill known nowadays as Mound Mithridates, ancient Pantikapaion, which became the capital of the Bosporan Kingdom, is believed to have already existed by the second quarter of the sixth century BCE. The main *temenos* of the city is traditionally thought to have been located on the upper plateau of Mound Mithridates overlooking the sea, as shown by the numerous, albeit fragmentary, finds dating from the sixth to early fifth centuries BCE. These include sculpture fragments, akroteria from large and small altars, bases and other fragments of votive columns from small structures of the Ionic order, along with architectural details from several monumental buildings of the Ionic order.

Apollo

Apollo was considered one of the most important deities of the Greek pantheon in the North Pontic area (Rusyaeva 2005: 204–6). It has been suggested that, during the Pontic colonization, Apollo Ietros, by far the most popular *epiklesis* of this deity, was elevated by the oracle of Didyma to a special status as the main protector of the colonists and of the newly founded settlements around the Black Sea (Ehrhardt 1983: 130–2; for an overview of the literature see Ustinova 2009: 246–60; on the importance

of the cult among the Milesian colonists, see Plin. *HN* 34.18; Strabo 7.6.1; Koshelenko 2010: 380).

The hypothesis that an early temple dedicated to Apollo (most probably Apollo Ietros) once stood on the summit of Mound Mithridates was first proposed by V. D. Blavatsky in 1950. This was based on the finds of several column bases and an architrave, all of the Ionic order. Over the years, more fragments of capitals and of entablature have been discovered. A recent meticulous investigation of these fragments allowed V. P. Tolstikov to corroborate the assumption that a large temple-like structure of the Ionic order (Samian type), dating from 500–485 BCE, indeed stood on the *temenos* of Pantikapaion (Tolstikov 2010). However, its attribution to Apollo Ietros remains a conjecture, albeit a plausible one.

The rapid growth of the city was halted sometime in the period 490–480 BCE, probably because of attacks by nomadic tribes, attested by destruction and burned strata found in the Greek *apoikiai* on both sides of the Cimmerian Bosporos. The recently discovered traces of some unusual ritual activity on the *temenos* of Pantikapaion are perhaps related to these military events. In the middle of the *temenos*, perhaps not far from the presumed location of the Temple of Apollo Ietros, on a makeshift platform right on top of the burned stratum that contained numerous arrowheads of Scythian type, was found a skeleton of a horse. The horse had been decapitated, cut in half, and its spine removed. Afterwards, the carcass was carefully placed on its side with all four legs, hooves still in place, neatly folded underneath. This mutilation was quite possibly the result of *sphagion*—a ritual killing—performed by the Bosporan Greeks after yet another military confrontation. The horse probably belonged to the presumed attackers, most likely the Scythians, as several elements of the harness—bronze roundels in the form of a coiled wolf in the Scythian animal style—were found on the skeleton. This so far unique discovery may be evidence for a ritual killing with some elements of sympathetic magic, in which an enemy horse was symbolically identified with (and substituted for) the human enemy (Scythians). The animal's death may have been meant to influence the outcome of future battles: 'What we do to this horse, may we do to our enemies' (Tolstikov and Muratov forthcoming).

It is possible that the early Temple of Apollo suffered during these military events and was later rebuilt. The cult of Apollo Ietros is well

attested in Bosporan epigraphy from the late fifth century BCE onwards (*CIRB* 6, 10, 25, 974, 1037, 1044; Tolstikov 1992: 69, fig. 10, 13, 95 n. 9; Koshelenko 2010: 381). A dedicatory inscription on the statue pedestal dating from 240–220 BCE is of particular importance: it shows that, by at least the third century BCE, members of the ruling dynasty of Spartokidai were hereditary chief priests of Apollo Ietros (*CIRB* 25).

Artemis-Hekate-Ditagoia

Within the *temenos*, in the vicinity of the sacred area of Apollo, dwelled his sister Artemis. In the course of excavations, two chambers have been uncovered, their foundations cut into the natural rock and partially faced with marble veneer. The nature of the finds, such as the fragments of marble sculptures and an offering table (*trapeza*) with a dedicatory inscription, implies that this structure had religious functions, and it has been identified as part of a sanctuary. The archaeological material found in these two chambers dates from the second century BCE through the early first century CE (Tolstikov 1987). The identity of the deity (or deities) worshipped there is not certain. Fragments of a large statue of a goddess—of which a head, fingers, small pieces of drapery, and fragments of the feet with intricate sandals survive—suggest Artemis. Furthermore, a marble *hekateion*, a triple-bodied statue of Hekate encircled by three dancers, was also discovered there.

Of particular interest is a marble *trapeza*, supported by two sculpted pilasters ending in lion's paws, which was most probably placed in a niche in the first room. A Greek dedicatory inscription placed on the front facet of the table presents a document of utmost importance for the political and religious history of the Bosporan Kingdom (Tolstikov 1987: 101, fig. 14; Vinogradov 1987). According to the inscription, the offering table was dedicated to the sanctuary by Princess Senamotis, daughter of King Skiloures and wife of Herakleides. The dedication was made for the good health and well-being of the Bosporan king Pairisades V, the last king of the Spartokidai dynasty, who, sometime in the last quarter of the second century BCE, handed over his power to Mithridates VI (Vinogradov 1987: 59; Strabo 7.4.4).

The recipient of the beautiful *trapeza* was a female deity named Ditagoia. This is the first, and thus far the only, instance when this evidently non-Greek name appears in written documents. Its linguistic origins remain obscure. Senamotis' father Skiloures, rumoured to have fathered numerous children (Strabo 7.4.3), was a well-known king of the late Scythians whose capital was located in Scythian Neapolis—on the outskirts of the modern-day city of Simferopol (Zaitsev 2001). This inscription, written sometime between 130–120 BCE, throws some light not only on Greco-Scythian political relationships in the Bosporos, but also on the religious interactions in the Kingdom. It vividly demonstrates that dynastic marriages between Scythian royalty (daughter of the king) and Greek nobility (Herakleides) took place, and that a certain 'barbarian element' was present not only in the Bosporan cities, but at court as well. Ditagoia, a deity of non-Greek origin, was openly worshipped by a Scythian princess in the capital of the Bosporan Kingdom, in the sanctuary presumably dedicated to Artemis and Hekate, or perhaps to Artemis-Hekate (Burkert 1985: 171 n. 15). Indeed, there is further evidence that suggests that Ditagoia was somehow associated with Hekate, as a very similar *hekateion* was found in the sacred area of a *megaron* (a palatial complex) excavated in Scythian Neapolis; its most likely residents were King Skiloures and his family members (Zaitsev 2001: 268–70).

Worship of Hekate alone is attested at another location in Pantikapaion. A small cave on the outskirts of the city was discovered between 1846 and 1850. Its floor was covered with a relatively thick layer of pebbles and ash. On the wall opposite the entrance, in a marble-lined niche, stood a marble *hekateion* dated to the early Hellenistic period. This small edifice was located on the border between the city and the necropolis, near the road and by one of the city gates, as befits Hekate's identity as an inhabitant of liminal spaces and cross-roads, and a protector of city gates (Burkert 1985: 171; Ohlerich 2009: 83).

Artemis seems to have enjoyed a long and continuous veneration on the acropolis of Pantikapaion, next to her divine brother. The earliest recorded dedication to Artemis of Ephesos—an inscription on a bronze handle of an *infundibulum* (a ritual vessel of Etruscan origin) of the sixth century BCE—comes from this area (Treister 1999). More recently, the discovery of a marble lamp dating to the early sixth century BCE also supports the Artemis connection: these types of lamps are often associated with the

sanctuaries of Artemis in Ephesos, Samos, and Brauron (Tolstikov and Muratov 2013: 183–5). These early finds all come from the area adjacent to the above-mentioned sanctuary of Artemis-Hekate-Ditagoia, which was still functioning in the second half of the second century BCE. A dedication to Artemis, set up by King Pharnakes, son of Mithridates VI and ruler of the Bosporos from 63 to 47 BCE, was also found in the vicinity of this sanctuary (*CIRB* 28).

Palace-Temple

A large monumental complex with an area of at least 1350m^2 was recently excavated on the eastern plateau of Mound Mithridates, within the territory of the acropolis of Pantikapaion. This edifice, which seems to have functioned from the mid-fourth until at least the late second century BCE, featured a peristyle court and was identified by the excavator as a royal residence, or *basileia* (Tolstikov 2003: 726–32). In its immediate vicinity, the remains of a small temple *in antis* have been discovered. The completely preserved foundation of the temple featured an anti-seismic device: two horizontal parallel grooves ran through the blocks of the foundation around the whole perimeter. These most probably contained wooden beams soaked in resin to protect the foundation from earthquakes (Tolstikov 2003: 730; Lozovoi and Dobrovolskaya 2010: 135–6). The temple's unusual proximity to the royal residence suggests that it was a 'palace-church' of sorts and perhaps was frequented by the inhabitants of the *basileia*. Built probably in the mid-third century BCE, the temple functioned through the first half of the first century BCE. The unusually good preservation of the temple's foundation is a result of a thick layer of green clay that was used to level the surface after the temple's destruction. Along with the foundation, a stratum of debris containing objects present in the temple at the time of destruction was preserved as well.

Among the objects found in this layer were 112 fragments of terracotta figurines that comprised the majority of finds at the temple site. Among them, one particular deity, Dionysos, as well as his followers, was prominently represented. It is not surprising that Dionysos was one of the deities worshipped in the small temple on the acropolis of Pantikapaion, at least during the last phase of the temple's existence. Temples and

sanctuaries located in the vicinity of royal residences often housed the cults of the divine patrons of the rulers. Mithridates VI Eupator Dionysos, who became a new ruler of the Bosporan Kingdom in the late second century BCE, was well known as an avid devotee of Dionysos, his patron god (Homolle 1884: 102–4; Plut. *Sulla* 11; Cic. *Pro Flac*. 25.60), and must have been responsible for increasing the popularity of this cult in the Bosporan capital (Ilyina and Muratova 2008; Saprykin 2009: 250–1).

These three case studies provide an overview of (as well as wide-ranging evidence for) different types of cults, and reveal something of the ways in which gods were introduced and worshipped, and how some cults developed, in the capital of the Bosporan Kingdom. The cult of Apollo Ietros, the patron of the first colonists, was brought by them from Asia Minor and remained the main state cult well into the late third century BCE, at the very least. Artemis was venerated alongside her brother. It seems that, at some point, the cult of Artemis was combined with that of Hekate, another deity with Asia Minor connections. In the case of Ditagoia, a goddess of unknown origin, who, at least in the second century BCE, was associated with Artemis-Hekate, we might have a unique example of an assimilated foreign deity, who was venerated in the central *temenos* of the capital. The small temple located 'next door' to the royal residence on the acropolis of Pantikapaion seems to have been a semi-private temple serving the *basileia*. Although the original resident deities remain unknown, one of its latest likely occupants, Dionysos, was the patron deity of the ruler at the time. The traces of a ritually slain enemy horse constitute a unique example of the war-related magic rites performed by the Bosporan Greeks.

BOSPORAN TOPOGRAPHY, CULT PLACES, AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The focus now changes from the cults in the capital to the more general area of the Bosporan Kingdom. This section deals with 'one of the most fundamental [questions] in the history of any religion'—'how does man

know where to worship his gods?' (Malkin 1987: 135). Here, we consider some evidence for how colonists selected the 'right' sacred spots for sanctuaries and temples near to their new settlements (Koshelenko 2010: 356).

Topographical features of the landscape often played a crucial role in this selection: the Greeks looked for signs—usually conspicuous landmarks of some kind—that indicated the inherent sacredness of a locale. Although two shores of the Cimmerian Bosporos—the Asian and European sides—presented rather different natural environments in antiquity, as they still do today, there is one particular natural phenomenon commonly found on both sides of the straits: mud volcanoes (Lozovoi and Dobrovolskaya 2010: 136). Their numinous beauty and the surrounding landscapes are likely to have mesmerized the Greeks. Large bubbling puddles, irregular knobby cones of different sizes oozing dark viscous mud, often accompanied by steam, odorous vapours, and noises—all these features were probably understood as signs of proximity to the entrance to the Hades (Ivantchik 2010: 322–3). It is not surprising to find sanctuaries that most likely housed chthonian cults located in their immediate vicinity, and we now examine some examples of them.

The Maiskaya Mound

An archaeological site known as the Maiskaya Mound is located on top of a volcanic hill near Phanagoria in the Asian Bosporos. The remains of a building, considered by the initial excavator to be either a treasury or a temple *in antis*, were uncovered in the course of archaeological explorations in the 1960s (Marchenko 1963). The location of this sanctuary was not accidental. Its peculiar feature is a natural cleft (12m long, almost 2m deep, and 3m wide) flanked by two active mud volcanoes. The sanctuary remains largely unexcavated, but this cleft was filled with numerous votives, including 1164 terracotta figurines. The prevailing types among these figurines were female *protomes* (terracotta busts made in a single mould), most commonly associated with Demeter and Kore. All figurines were of local production.

Based on a careful analysis of all the finds, it has been established that the terracottas found in the cleft date from the mid-fifth through the mid-

third century BCE, whereas the sanctuary remained in operation until the first century BCE (Ilyina 2010: 425). It remains unclear whether the cleft was used as a *favissa* (a reservoir for the discarded gifts—the property of the deities—from the sanctuary), or whether the worshippers were depositing their votives into the cleft themselves. If Demeter and Kore-Persephone were indeed the main deities venerated here, an opening in the ground between the two mouths of the mud volcanoes seems like the most logical place for the offerings.

The Boris and Gleb Mound

In the early nineteenth century, on the mound of Boris and Gleb (in the Taman Peninsula), as a result of an eruption of a mud volcano followed by a landslide, the remains of a sanctuary were uncovered. The site yielded two dedicatory inscriptions, both dated to the second half of the fourth century BCE: one mentions a temple dedicated to Artemis Agrotera (*CIRB* 1014) on behalf of Xenokleides; the other is a statue base inscribed to the 'mighty' gods Sanerges and Astara (*CIRB* 1015), two deities of unknown, but most probably non-Greek, origin. According to the inscription, the latter dedication was set up on behalf of Komosarye, daughter of Gorgippos and wife of Pairisades. Although Komosarye appears in her dedication as a private person, she should be identified as a member of the Spartokidai dynasty, wife of the Bosporan king Pairisades I (r. 344/3–311/10 BCE) and daughter of Gorgippos, the uncle of the latter. Two fragmentary limestone statues were found nearby and could belong with the inscribed pedestal, although this is not certain. A statue that might be a representation of Astara is an almost life-sized figure dressed in a long, high-belted chiton; the head is missing. The statue believed to represent Sanerges is now lost, but reportedly it was a cloaked figure of a man.

Aphrodite in the Asian and European Bosporos

It seems that all the sanctuaries associated with the mud volcanoes, which we have examined here, were connected with female deities of a chthonian nature, as the dedicatory inscriptions and numerous terracotta figurines

testify. Likewise, the cult of Aphrodite of Apatouros probably also had chthonian connotations and might have been related to the phenomenon of the mud volcanoes. Although this cult is attested on both sides of the straits, it appears to have been much more prevalent in the Asian Bosporos (Taman Peninsula). Of particular interest are dedicatory inscriptions that contain the following *epikleses*: Aphrodite Ourania (*CIRB* 972), Aphrodite Ourania the Mistress of Apatouros (Aphrodite *Ourania Apatourou medeousa; CIRB* 31, 35, 75, 971, 1111), and Aphrodite Apatouriada (*CIRB* 1045).

Strabo mentions two sites in the Asian Bosporos connected with this cult: ‘Apatouros, the sanctuary of Aphrodite’ and ‘a notable temple of Aphrodite Apatouros’ in Phanagoria (Strab. 11.2.10). He then attempts to explain the etymology of this *epiklesis* by linking it to the Greek word *apate* (‘treachery’) through the following story: the giants once attacked the goddess in the area, and in order to punish them she called upon Herakles and hid him in a cave. As the impatient giants were arriving to be received by the goddess in the cave, she gave them one by one to Herakles to be murdered ‘through treachery’. The origin of this myth is unclear. It could be considered as one of the ‘colonising’ myths through which Greeks laid claim to foreign territories (Malkin 1987: 90; Dougherty 1993: 136–56). On the other hand, because of the erotic and comic undertones of the story—Aphrodite luring the giants into the cave—it has been proposed that Strabo may have actually used a text of a mime (a type of comic theatrical performance) as a source for his story (Tokhtasiev 1983). Nonetheless, what is important here is the uncanny connection between a cave and a goddess (Ivantchik 2010: 323); her cult must have had chthonian connotations as well, linking it to the chthonian cults of Demeter and Kore-Persephone.

To this day, neither the location of Apatouros nor the exact origins of the cult are known. There exists a popular argument that Aphrodite Ourania was an amalgamation of a goddess of Scythian and/or of Sindo-Maiotian origins with a Greek goddess (Ustinova 1999: 29–53; Shaub 2007: 80–123). Unfortunately, there is no evidence to support this assumption and it has recently been challenged (Tokhtasiev 1986; Koshelenko 2010: 361–3). Indeed, it is unlikely that the cult of Aphrodite in the Bosporos had anything to do with the mysterious and rather elusive ‘great goddess’ of the Maiotians, or Sindians, or Scythians (Koshelenko

2010: 379). Thus far, no traces of Sindo-Maiotian sanctuaries have been discovered anywhere in the Taman Peninsula, and the relationship with the Scythians—at least for the first two centuries of the *apoikiai*'s existence—was mostly confrontational.

In addition, practically nothing is known about the religious beliefs of the Scythians. Our only source on the subject is Herodotos, and it has to be treated with great caution. Two passages in his *Histories* are used as evidence to demonstrate a 'Scythian connection' with the cult of Aphrodite. The first passage (Hdt. 4.8–9) recounts one of the versions of the origins of the Scythians, where a snake-legged maiden lures Herakles into a cave and afterwards gives birth to three sons, one of which becomes the forefather of all Scythians. In the second passage (Hdt. 4.59), the Scythian goddess Argimpasa is compared with the Greek Aphrodite, among other deities. Although associations between a chthonian female deity and a cave/crevice are apparent, this is definitely not enough to postulate a Greek–barbarian connection in the cult of Aphrodite in the Bosporos.

It has been suggested that the cult of Aphrodite in general, and of Aphrodite Ourania in particular, spread into the European Bosporos from the Taman Peninsula, where it seems to have been more prominent in the fourth century BCE (Ohlerich 2009: 199–202; Koshelenko 2010: 379–80). The earliest dedication to Aphrodite Ourania found in the European Bosporos dates from the second century BCE (*CIRB* 75). It should be noted, though, that the cult of Aphrodite—not necessarily with the *epiklesis* Ourania—could have arrived in the cities of the European Bosporos independently, with the Milesian colonists (see *CIRB* 7, 13, 17). Relatively recently, in the course of the archaeological excavations in Miletos, an Archaic sanctuary of Aphrodite has been excavated, thus proving what scholars had long suspected, that a cult of Aphrodite in Miletos existed as early as the beginning of the sixth century BCE (Ehrhardt 1983: 164–6; Greaves 2004).

It seems that the mud volcanoes on both sides of the Cimmerian Bosporos were considered by the Greek colonists as indicators of sacred spots appropriate for sanctuaries. Because of the underworld connotations of these sites, it is usually assumed that the deities worshipped there were of a chthonian nature. As some of these sanctuaries have not been

thoroughly investigated, it remains impossible to determine whether there was any cultic activity before the coming of the Greeks.

The So-Called ‘Sindian’ Half-Figures

It seems that the natural phenomenon of mud volcanoes influenced the ideas of the Bosporan Greeks about the underworld—and this found its manifestation in a group of funerary monuments.

The notion of *anodos* (movement upwards) has long been associated with Kore-Persephone and her ascent back to her mother Demeter. A number of long busts or half-figures, presumably representing Kore or other female chthonian goddesses, appear in the Mediterranean from the fifth century BCE onwards (Sturgeon 1975). Although only a small group in total, the specimens have been found in diverse locations, such as Kyrene in North Africa, some islands of the south-western Aegean, Sicily, and southern Italy. The majority of these demi-statues represent female characters, and only in the Roman period do a few male examples make their appearance (Sturgeon 1975: 231, 232). The general consensus is that they all served as funerary monuments, but only rarely did they represent the deceased; rather, they have been understood as chthonian goddesses ‘rising to receive the dead’ (Sturgeon 1975: 235).

The tradition of marking the graves with half-figures appears independently among some of the inhabitants of the Bosporan Kingdom. A group of about seventy locally produced limestone sculptures, found mostly on the Asian side of the Bosporos (although several examples have been found on the European side as well), were first associated with the Sindians by the excavator N. I. Sokolsky. However, there is no particular reason to link them with these people, who, by the mid-fifth century BCE, were heavily Hellenized and whose material culture probably did not differ from that of the Bosporan Greeks. Although, unfortunately, all the half-figures were found in secondary contexts, their identification as funerary monuments is fairly certain. They should be dated from between the third and the first century BCE.

The Bosporan semi-figures are rather consistent in their iconography: men and women are represented in relief (on stelai) or in the round (as free-standing statues), and all are cut off at the level of the mid-thigh.

Since it is quite certain that these half-figures do not represent the ascending deities, but the deceased, they should probably be understood as representing a descent to the underworld (*kathodos*). Produced and found in the areas surrounded by the mud volcanoes, this Bosporan sculptural tradition appears to illustrate Greek beliefs about the underworld, which, in turn, were undoubtedly influenced by local geological phenomenon (Muratov forthcoming).

Other Gods

Among other deities whose cults are attested in the Bosporan Kingdom from the sixth through the first centuries BCE, we find some of the 'usual suspects' of the Greek pantheon. Zeus is mentioned on a number of graffiti from the fourth century BCE, whereas inscriptions on larger monuments survive only from the Roman period (Shaub 2007: 368–9, with literature).

It is possible that Athena did not attain popularity among the Bosporans or that the traces of her cult have not been well preserved throughout the region. However, there are indications that she may have occupied a place of some importance at the court of the Spartokidai. Among the debris of the *basileia* in Pantikapaion a magnificent marble head of an over life-sized statue has been found. This head, which initially depicted a goddess crowned with a metal *stephane* (diadem), did undergo some iconographic modifications in the early second half of the third century BCE. The *stephane* was removed, the hair on top and on the back of the head chiselled off, and a new headdress—most probably a metal helmet, to judge from the additional holes and a large iron clamp—added. The new appearance of the statue probably reflected the new identity of the goddess, that of Athena. It is also not coincidental that an image of Athena in a Corinthian helmet appears on the coins of Leucon II around the same time (Tolstikov 2003: 729).

Dedications to Herakles on vessels are known from the fifth century, while dedicatory inscriptions on marble and limestone pedestals, found on both sides of the Bosporos, date from the fourth and third centuries BCE (*CIRB* 16, 973, 1036). Several votive reliefs depicting a standing or reclining Herakles are known from the third century BCE; not to mention,

in addition, numerous terracotta figurines of the hero, most of them produced locally from the third through first centuries BCE.

The cult of Hermes is attested by graffiti dating from the fifth to fourth centuries BCE. A third-century BCE inscription from the Asian Bosporos is of particular interest since it mentions agonistic races by youths in honour of Hermes (Gajdukevitch 1971: 233).

Dionysos always seems to have been popular in the Bosporan Kingdom, as attested by a number of his marble statues and statuettes from the fourth to third centuries BCE. There might have been a sanctuary of the god and a theatre in Pantikapaion (Polyaen. V, 44; Gaidukevich 1971: 175), but neither have been located yet. A fourth-century BCE dedication to Dionysos contains a rather rare *epiklesis*—Areios (*CIRB* 15). Recently, a unique archaeological complex, dating from the first half of the fourth century BCE, has been uncovered in Nymphaion. More than fifty elaborate architectural details forming a *propylon* (monumental entrance) to a *temenos* have been found. Particularly noteworthy is a large fragment of an inscribed architrave: 'Theopropides son of Megakles, while holding a post of *agonothete*, dedicated this *propylon* to Dionysos' (Sokolova 2003: 771, 2005). Archaeological investigations of this exceptional complex still continue. The cult of Dionysos seems to have received a 'second wind' with the coming of Mithridates VI Eupator Dionysos in the last quarter of the second century BCE, and retained its popularity into the first centuries CE.

Kybele, known in the Bosporos as Meter, Ma, Phrygian Mother, and perhaps Angisse (*CIRB* 27), was popular in the Classical and Hellenistic period. In addition to graffiti that contain the name of Kybele dating from the fifth through the second centuries, there are also dedicatory inscriptions (*CIRB* 21) and several votive limestone reliefs from the first century BCE, representing Kybele flanked by Hermes and Hekate. Terracotta figurines of Kybele are attested from the fifth century BCE, and by the third century BCE they are by far the most numerous group.

Having surveyed a combination of the materials that pertain to official (large dedicatory inscriptions and statues, coins) and popular (terracotta figurines, graffiti) worship, it is apparent that, by and large, from the sixth through the first centuries BCE, the pantheon in the Bosporan Kingdom comprised deities typical of a Greek city of Asia Minor origins.

CONCLUSION

As the Greeks explored new territories in the Northern Black Sea, they certainly came into contact with diverse peoples, both sedentary and nomadic. They might have been influenced to a certain degree by some new religious ideas and even might have adopted and adapted some of them for their own use. However, there is very little evidence to support a claim that the religious beliefs of the settlers were influenced by the local non-Greek people. No compelling example of Greco-barbarian religious syncretism has been found yet, at least prior to the first centuries CE. Throughout almost four centuries of Bosporan history, from the sixth through the second centuries BCE, only four deities with non-Greek names have been recorded. Astara and Sanerges (*CIRB* 1015) received a dedication in the second half of the fourth century BCE in the Asian Bosporos. The other two are Angisse (*CIRB* 27)—probably a derivative from Kybele-related Agdistis (Radet 1909: 58–60)—and Ditagoia, a goddess of unknown origin worshipped by a Scythian princess in the sanctuary of Artemis-Hekate. Both goddesses were venerated in Pantikapaion in the second half of the second century BCE.

Religious life in the Bosporos undoubtedly reflected historical and political changes within the state. After the Bosporan Kingdom was incorporated into the domain of Mithridates VI, some cults (Ma, Mithras-Attis, Mên) were imported from Asia Minor and Pontos (Saprykin 2009). Although the Bosporos was never part of the Roman Empire officially, it was certainly closely observed and occasionally managed by it and, to a certain degree, received artistic and religious influences. The Bosporan rulers of the first centuries CE styled themselves *philokaiser* and *philoromanos* (‘friend of Caesar and of the Roman people’) and occasionally served as priests of the Imperial cult, which was fairly widespread in the area (Koshelenko 2010: 357).

SUGGESTED READING

The language barrier remains the largest obstacle for students and scholars interested in the culture and religion of the Northern Black Sea in antiquity, as the majority of works are written in Russian. Ustinova 1999 provides a substantial overview of literature, but deals mostly with the cults of Aphrodite and Theos Hypsistos. A recent collection of articles dealing with the religious monuments of the Black Sea, including its northern part, is useful, although the translations of several articles are a bit confusing (Petropoulos and Maslennikov 2010). The most up-to-date overview of recent literature, and of archaeological and epigraphic materials from the Bosporos relating to religion, is to be found in Ivonne Ohelrich's (2009) doctoral dissertation.

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CHAPTER 40

THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

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INTRODUCTION

THE serious study of the connections between Greek religion and the Ancient Near East started at the end of the nineteenth century,[1] when the German classicist Otto Gruppe (1851–1921: Biltz 1921; Casadio 2009: 146–7) published a massive review of Greek cults and myths in their relationships to Oriental religions. He analysed the religious transfers to the Greeks from the Assyrians, Phoenicians, Phrygians, and Egyptians, but not the Persians (Gruppe 1887; Marchand 2009: 232–3). His book was mainly based on snippets of knowledge that have been preserved by ancient Greek and Roman authors, but barely on sources in the original languages, although Gruppe knew Hebrew and some Assyrian. His project clearly was much too ambitious, as knowledge of the original cultures, languages, and religions of the Ancient Near East was still in its infant stages. In fact, it has continued to develop slowly, and is still making progress today through the steady trickle of new texts and inscriptions.

It would be a century before Walter Burkert (1931–2015) renewed scholarly interest in the influence of the Near East on Greek religion and

culture. This became the most prominent part of his work in the 1980s and 1990s, leading to two fundamental publications: *The Orientalizing Revolution* (1992, first German edition 1984) and *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis* (2004), in addition to an important series of accompanying articles (Burkert 2003). Whereas the first book concentrated on the transmitters of 'Oriental' religious practices, such as travelling charismatics (see section 'The Carriers of the Religious Transfers'), and the connections with Akkadian literature, such as *Athrahasis* and *Enuma elish* (see section 'Ritual, Mythical, and Cultic Transfers from Anatolia and the Levant'), the second cast its net wider and also looked for Greek connections with Persia (see section 'Influence from Persia?') and Egypt. In addition to Burkert, Martin West has also displayed a profound interest in the Near East, from his earliest work to his major contribution on the literary influences of the Near East on Greek poetry and myth (West 1997) and the first volume of his collected papers (West 2011).

Undoubtedly, an important factor in the favourable reception of Burkert and West has been the fierce debate that arose from the publication of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* (Bernal 1987–2006). Although his results have been widely rejected (Lefkowitz and Rogers 1996), Bernal raised consciousness about the influence of Africa and the Near East on ancient Greece. In contrast to his wild etymologies, naive approach to the sources, and general neglect of the archaeological evidence, the generally sound methodology and obvious command of the philological evidence in Burkert's and West's work has been a relief. Even if West's parallels are not always convincing (Dowden 2001; Wasserman 2001), and Burkert's etymological proposals not always persuasive (Stol 2004), their work has been the basis for all subsequent studies (for examples, see 'Suggested Reading').

But how should we phrase what we are doing? Are 'Greek religion' and the 'Ancient Near East' really satisfactory terms when it comes to serious research? As regards the first term, it is obvious that we can quarrel about its utility. The increasing attention to local religion has shown that each Greek polis had its own pantheon and rituals. Yet the overlap or family resemblance between different poleis also suggests it is not really helpful to speak of Greek *religions* (see further, on such questions, in this volume, Osborne, Chapter 1).

It is somewhat different with the Ancient Near East. The term ‘Near East’ was coined at the end of the nineteenth century after the ‘Far East’ had come into being and, originally, even included the Balkans. Gradually, it came to mean the area that is also nowadays referred to as ‘Middle East’ (Van Dongen 2014), although it normally leaves out Western Anatolia and sometimes Egypt. Moreover, it suggests a unity that was certainly not there, and I will use the term primarily as a geographical unit running from Western Anatolia to Iran, but with the exclusion of Egypt, which is covered in a different contribution (this volume, Kleibl, Chapter 41). It is clear, though, that the Near East is an umbrella term that covers a wide area in time and place. We only need to think of the Old Akkadian, Hittite, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian empires, not to mention the Hurrian, Luwian, Karian, Lykian, Lydian (three languages related to Luwian: Melchert 2003; Yakubovich 2010), Phrygian, and Phoenician languages, in order to realize that we are speaking about many languages and cultures that had different contacts in many different ways with Greece or, perhaps better, Greeks, over a period of time that spans many centuries. Moreover, people may have spoken one language in daily life and used another for writing or ritual prescriptions. People may have been deported to places different from their original territory or become dominated by empires with a different language. Some cultures were less porous than others: the Hittites welcomed all kinds of foreign gods, but the Mesopotamians did not. In other words, we have to be very careful in distinguishing between culture, language, and political entity.

The continuing discovery of archaeological artefacts and increasing knowledge of the different texts and languages of the area under discussion make it virtually impossible for a single person to follow the most recent developments and their relationship to ancient Greek religion. For example, the discovery of a new Hittite text in 2002, called *Ea and the Beast*, contains new evidence on the role of the Mesopotamian/Hurrian god Ea (Rutherford 2011), who was also in the background of the Prometheus of Aischylos (Stephanie West 1994: 145–9); the name of the Iliadic, Lykian hero Sarpedon has now been shown to belong to a Lyko-Karian family of names (Schürr 2013a), and even the famous encounters of Odysseus with Nausikaa and with the Cyclops now have, almost certainly, Oriental ancestries (George 2012; Zgoll 2012). In a way, then, every contribution on the topic is a preliminary exploration that can get

out of date very quickly. With that proviso, I will focus on some exemplary problems where new discoveries enable us to advance our knowledge, and limit myself to the most recent publications in this respect.

In thinking about the influence of the Near East on Greek religion, it will be helpful to distinguish two types of religious transfers: first, those from Mesopotamian, Hurrian/Hittite, Phoenician, and Persian religious systems, and, secondly, those from the epichoric religions, especially Luwian (Hutter 2003), Karian (Debord 2009), and Lykian (Frei 1990; Neumann 1994: 178–90), as well as Phrygian (Hutter 2006; Strobel 2010), which were encountered by the Greeks immigrating to Anatolia and slowly integrated by them into a religious system that still preserved part of its age-old, albeit fragmented, tradition (Rutherford 2006). The former have been studied much more than the latter, due to the fact that the Luwian, Karian, and Lykian languages have become known better only very recently, so I will pay more attention to them (see section 'Transfers from the Luwians, Lykians, and Karians') than to the second type (see section 'Ritual, Mythical, and Cultic Transfers from Anatolia and the Levant'). In both cases, though, we are faced with the problem of the routes and the carriers of these transfers (see section 'The Carriers of the Religious Transfers'). We will close with some observations on the Persians, which have been studied least in this respect at this point (see section 'Influence from Persia?').

TRANSFERS FROM THE LUWIANS, LYKIANS, AND KARIANS

Hittite sources mention a country called Arzawa with a most important city Apasa, the later Greek Ephesos, which covered much of the area later known as Lydia and its surroundings. Its population spoke Luwian, Karian, Lykian, and Lydian, and quite a few indigenous names and religious traditions survived in Karia, Lykia, and Cilicia well into the Roman period, albeit often in Greek guise (Bryce 2003: 101–4; Parker 2013).

Originally, there was not a single national religious system but a series of local pantheons (Hutter 2003: 218; Rutherford 2006: 140) with, presumably, local and national rituals. In the course of time, many local gods seem to have become incorporated in Hellenized pantheons but they still had recognizable epithets of non-Greek origin, such as Zeus Osogollis or Zeus Osogo(as). Even if these epithets have defied interpretation so far, they are certainly of Anatolian origin.

Only the most prominent gods of the native population will have survived the many political changes, albeit in ways that reflected their original identity and representation only partially. For example, the name of the chief god of the Hittite and Luwian pantheon, the storm-god Tarhunt, survived in Anatolian onomastics well into Hellenistic times (Hutter 2003: 221; Adiego 2007: 331–2; and see, in this volume, López-Ruiz, Chapter 25). Given his role as god of the storm with its concomitant lightning as well as with might and strength (Hutter 2003: 220–4), Zeus Stratios, 'of the Army', of Labraunda, probably continued this old god, as he is usually depicted with the Hittite/Luwian double-axe (Teffeteller 2012). Other epithets of Zeus in Karia, such as Areios and Strategos, also point to this 'military' Zeus, all of them probably being reflections of an ancient Karian god (*vieux dieu carien*) related to Tarhunt (Laumonier 1958: 187). One manifestation of the Luwian storm-god was Pihassassi, the storm-god of lightning. As he was closely associated with the horse, it is most interesting that the horse Pegasos, whose name derives from that Luwian god (Hutter 2003: 223), was especially worshipped in Karia and Lykia (Laumonier 1958: 205–7; Bremmer 2013: 68).

Another striking aspect of the storm-god was his connection with vineyards (Hutter 2003: 224). Now precisely in central Anatolia, in Phrygia, another area with a Luwian substrate, we find Zeus Ampeleites, 'Of the vineyard' (Robert 1987: 338, 340, 368, 373–86; Drew-Bear and Thomas 1999: 253ff., 318ff.; 355ff., 372; *SEG* 57.1311), who clearly also had his roots in Luwian religion and who may help us to explain a problem of the mythology of Dionysos. Greek inscriptions from Lydia mention a Meter Hipte who is worshipped together with Zeus Sabazios (Paz de Hoz 1999: 40.19–21). This Hipte is known as the nurse of Dionysos from the early CE *Orphic Hymns* (48, 49; see Morand 2001: 174–81), but she has now also turned up as his mother or a woman (nurse?) who is described as happening upon him in a new, late third-century BCE papyrus (Obbink

2011: 291–4) about the birth of the god. His father, Zeus, is identified with Sabazios, and the story is located in Lydian Maionia, where all the inscriptions concerning Hipte are found. Now Hipte is the local form of Hebat, a Syrian-Anatolian goddess who was incorporated into the Hittite pantheon, where she became the consort of the storm-god Teshub (Trémouille 1997: 41–2), this couple surely being the 'ancestors' of the couple Hipte and Zeus (Sabazios). Interestingly, although Hebat is not found in Hittite texts beyond the river Halys—although she was worshipped in Kizzuwatna—her worship must have expanded westwards, as she was also known in Lykia (Neumann 1994: 171–4, 308; Schürr 2011: 219), which makes her survival in Lydia the more probable. Her expansion perhaps took place in the time of the Neo-Hittite, Assyrian, or even Lydian empires, as Gyges made strong overtures to the Assyrians (West 2011: 351–2). But why would Dionysos have been connected to this Hipte? Can it be that the association of Anatolian Zeus with grapes played an important role in this respect?

Next to the storm-god, the Luwians worshipped the sun-god (Hutter 2003: 224–7). Although Helios is a very minor god in the Greek pantheon, Mausolos, the famous fourth-century BCE ruler of Karia, derived his ancestry from this particular god, perhaps because the sun-god seems to have survived as the Karian deity Sinuri (Dale forthcoming a). The only place in Greece where Helios was really important was Rhodes, where one could find many 'curiosités religieuses' and where the cult of Helios was clearly old ('très ancien', Laumonier 1958: 682–4). It is here, the island at the periphery of Karia and Lykia, that we would expect ancient Anatolian gods, such as the sun-god, to survive.

Finally, one of the most famous gods of ancient Greece was Artemis of Ephesos, whose famous outfit of oval pendants hanging from her chest, called 'breasts' since the Church Father Jerome, has long defied satisfactory interpretation. In recent years, however, it has been persuasively suggested that these should be traced back to the Hittite *kursa* (Morris 2001ab; more cautiously, Hutter 2003: 268–9), a leather hunting-bag sometimes personified as a tutelary divinity (Bremmer 2008: 312–17). Indeed, Anatolian influence in Ephesos is the more likely as Ephesian Athena had incorporated the Hittite/Luwian goddess Maliya (Taracha 2009: 115; Hawkins 2013, 127–9; also Lykian: Neumann 1994: 132–3,

136–7, 188–9; Watkins 2007: 122–5), as Athena Malis (Hipponax, fr. 49.2 Degani[2]).

Artemis' priest was a eunuch, and such priests were typical of Anatolia, witness the famous Galli of Kybele and Attis in Pessinous, the priests of Hekate of Karian Lagina, and those in the temple of the Galli in Phrygian Hierapolis (Bremmer 2008: 288–9; Taylor 2008). Moreover, Hermaphroditos originated in Karian Halikarnassos, and in neighbouring Pedasa Athena grew a beard every time the community was threatened from outsiders (Bremmer 2009: 298–302, 304). As this playing with biological markers seems to be limited to Western Anatolia, we may suspect a pre-Luwian influence, but to suggest that we could identify this influence—the Hatti?—would be explaining *obscurum per obscurius*.

RITUAL, MYTHICAL, AND CULTIC TRANSFERS FROM ANATOLIA AND THE LEVANT

Let us now take a closer look at the routes of transmission of two famous transfers: the scapegoat rituals, and the Succession Myth of Kronos and the Titans. In 1919, shortly after the decipherment of Hittite, the British pioneer Assyriologist Archibald Sayce (1846–1933) noted the parallel of the Hittite scapegoat ritual with that of Leviticus 16 in the Old Testament. And in 1925, the German Hittitologist Johannes Friedrich (1893–1972) observed the parallel between the Hittite and a Greek scapegoat ritual (Burkert 1979: 60–1; Bremmer 2008: 170–96). We find similar rituals, then, in Israel, among the Hittites and at the Greek west coast of Anatolia. How do we explain this distribution and where did the ritual originate?

The largest mention of Anatolian scapegoats occurs in Arzawean ritual texts found in Hattuša, although our knowledge of them derives from Hittite ritual compositions (about 1300 BCE: Strauss 2006: 119–33; Collins 2010: 56–9). This has led the Hittitologist Miller (2004: 466–7) to suggest that Arzawa was the 'homeland' of the scapegoat rituals, which

subsequently ‘moved east’ towards Kizzuwatna (in Classical times known as Cilicia) and the Levant. However, his suggestion does not take into account the fact that our oldest testimonies come from Ebla and are dated to about 2350 BCE, thus well before the invasion of Anatolia by the Hittites and Luwians (Bremmer 2008: 170). These rites probably moved both southwards towards Israel and to the west in the direction of Cilicia, which was known for its close ritual contacts with the Levant (Miller 2005). From Kizzuwatna the scapegoat rituals will have been exported to Arzawa, probably via Luwians, rather than Hittites, as Hittite presence in Western Anatolia was fairly minimal (Niemeier 2008: 327–30; Vanschoonwinkel 2010). From Arzawa, the Ionian Greeks will have appropriated the ritual, perhaps even first in Ephesos, as Hipponax (frr. 6, 26, 30 Degani^{2}) from Ephesos is our oldest source for the Greek version of the scapegoat ritual, and from southern Ionia the ritual spread to Athens and northern Ionia (Bremmer 2008: 175–96).

Our second example is the transfer of the Hurrian–Hittite Succession Myth, traditionally called the *Kingship in Heaven Cycle*. Its opening song was known as *Song of Kumarbi*, until in 2007 it was noted that its real title was *Song of Emergence* (Beckman 2011; Van Dongen 2011, 2012). Since 1930, when the Swiss scholar Emil Forrer (1894–1986; Oberheid 2007) first pointed to the resemblance, its contents have often been compared to those of Hesiod’s *Theogony* (most recently, Rutherford 2007; Van Dongen 2011). This myth of, originally, the Hurrians in North Syria was appropriated both by the Hittites and the Phoenicians. Yet how this myth came to the Greeks is still not wholly clear.

Recent studies (Rutherford 2007; Lane Fox 2008: 259–314; López-Ruiz 2010) have persuasively derived the Succession Myth from the Phoenicians, and, as they show, the prominence of the monster Typhon—whose name, ‘Whirlwind’ (typhoon!), is related to the Phoenician mountain name Sapon, modern Jebel al-Aqra, via folk etymology (Haider 2005)—fully supports their arguments. Yet the picture is complicated, and new evidence seems to somewhat nuance this view. Now, Hesiod’s version had passed through Delphi, as he mentions the stone in Delphi that Kronos swallowed instead of Zeus (*Theogony* 498–500; West 2011: 144): the location means that there was already a version of the myth in circulation before Hesiod. Moreover, the Archaic Corinthian poet Eumelos knew a version of the *Titanomachy* with older motifs than that of Hesiod (West

2011: 355–67). Evidently, there were a number of versions, which, every moment, could be adapted to new input from accounts of the Succession Myth heard somewhere in the Ancient Near East (Rutherford 2007: 31).

Yet two problems of the Succession Myth have not yet been satisfactorily explained: the name of Kronos and the origin of the Titans. Kronos' non-Greek etymology suggests an import from peoples of Western Anatolia, such as the Solymoi and Lykians (Schürr 2011: 221), who, unlike the Greeks themselves, attached a certain importance to Kronos. Consequently, behind Kronos we have to suspect a Luwian, Hittite, or other indigenous god. An Anatolian background is supported by the fact that his festival, the Kronia, was celebrated only in a very limited area, namely in Samos and its colonies Perinthos and Amorgos, Naxos, Notion/Kolophon, and Magnesia on the Maeander. Evidently, the origin of Kronos must be looked for in that region in about the eighth century BCE, as the Homeric formula 'of Kronos with the crooked counsels', only fits the metre with the Ionian contraction, which points to a young stage of entry into epic (Bremmer 2008: 82).

But what about the Titans? They were called 'the old gods', old and/or dumb people were insulted as Kronoi, and Attic comedy used expressions such as 'older than Kronos' and 'older than Kronos and the Titans' (Bremmer 2008: 85, updated here). Evidently, the antiquity of this divine generation had become proverbial at a relatively early stage of the tradition. Now, the expression 'early gods' has recently been identified in a Hellenistic Greek grave inscription in Lykia (*SEG* 58.1605.2) as well as in Lykian epichoric inscriptions (Schürr 2011) and persuasively related to the well-known Hittite 'primeval gods'. Moreover, the number twelve of the Titans (West 2007: 162–3; Bremmer 2008: 77–8) also points to Anatolia where groups of twelve gods were well known; the Hittite 'primeval gods' actually consisted of two groups of six male and female divinities, as in Hesiod (Rutherford 2010: 51–2; Schürr 2013b). In fact, the Archaic poet Eumelos located the birth of Zeus in Lydia in a tantalizingly brief fragment that has been persuasively assigned to his *Titanomachy* (West 2011: 356). The location seems to be one more pointer to a connection with Western Anatolia.

It seems, then, that various versions of the Near Eastern Succession Myth reached Greece both via the sea route from the Levant and the land route of Anatolia. Yet there seems to be no indication that the *Titanomachy*

reached Greece via the Levant. Can it be that, originally, the Succession Myth proper came to Greece via Euboia, which was a major 'hub' for both literary and material Oriental influences in the Archaic Age (Lane Fox 2008; West 2011: 62–3), and that the *Titanomachy* came or was given new input via the Anatolian route? That is as far as we can go at the moment, as the early process of development of these various versions and their mutual influences wholly escape us.

THE CARRIERS OF THE RELIGIOUS TRANSFERS

In what ways did the transmission of myths, rituals, and gods take place between the Orient and Greece? Let us start with the myths. Where did the Near East preserve its myths and how were they transmitted? One answer is, of course, that they were recited during rituals. Yet the main mythological epics that influenced Greek mythology probably came along different routes. A recent study of the preservation of Hittite mythological texts (Lorenz and Rieken 2009) has concluded that much mythological literature, including Mesopotamian myths, was preserved in the libraries of the Lower City of Hattuša as material for scribal training. In Mesopotamia we find the same situation, although its scribes exercised with Sumerian rather than Akkadian literature. Interestingly, the same literary and mythological material that was used to train scribes in Hattuša was also found in the Amarna letters and in Ugarit. Although we find much less Mesopotamian literature in Ugarit than in Hattuša, both *Atrahasis* and *Gilgamesh* are attested, the latter with a tablet containing the beginning of the epic (George 2007); the *Gilgamesh* tablet of Megiddo probably also derives from scribal education (Byrne 2007: 8).

Homer took some of his Oriental material from the beginnings of *Atrahasis* and *Enuma elish* (Burkert 1992: 95); similarly the *Song of Emergence* is the first song of the *Kumarbi Cycle* (Bremmer 2008: 87–8), and a first tablet of *Gilgamesh*, as we just saw, was found in Ugarit. Apparently, it was a bilingual Greek or Levantine scribe who started the

chain of transmission that eventually resulted in the Near Eastern material appropriated by Homer and Hesiod. Perhaps this scribe gave his material to one of the wandering, possibly also bilingual (West 1997: 607–9), poets of the Near East or Greece (Hunter and Rutherford 2009; West 2011: 344–52).

For rituals we have to look in a different direction. Burkert (1992) has drawn attention to migrating seers and healers as well as public workers as the carriers of religious transfers (see also West 1997: 586–630; Bremmer 2008: 133–51; López-Ruiz 2010: 171–202). Burkert and West concentrated especially on transmission from the Levant, although we have shown that Western Anatolia should not be neglected either; hepatoscopy, too, probably reached Greece via Western Anatolia (Bachvarova 2012), just like augury (Mouton and Rutherford 2013), and not from Mesopotamia (Burkert 1992: 46–51). On the whole, though, the model has kept up well in the last two decades, and the stress on the Assyrian empire as an important factor (West 1997: 614–16; Burkert 2004: 7–11, 23) has only increased through study of the interaction between Greek art and the Orient (Gunter 2009), although contacts between Greeks and the Levant seem to have intensified during the Neo-Babylonian period (Kuhrt 2002).

As regards travelling seers, recent insights and discoveries enable us to improve our understanding in two cases. First, Tacitus (*Hist*. 2.3) mentions a Cypriot seer, Tamiras, who came from Cilicia, and whose name has to be connected to a gloss in Hesychios (τ 107) mentioning Tamiradai as 'some priests in Cyprus'. His name probably is to be explained from a Hittite word $^{\text{MUNUS}}$*damara*, 'cult personnel' (Egetmeyer 2010: 1.289). Apparently, Cilician seers had moved to Cyprus: one of the oldest Cypriot inscriptions, dating to 750–700 BCE and published only in 2001, was found in Cilicia (Egetmeyer 2010: 2.845).

A newly discovered Phoenician-Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription from Cilician Çineköyhas also contributed to a better understanding of the seer Mopsos whom Greek tradition represented as moving between the Ionian coast and Cilicia (Bremmer 2008: 136–43; López-Ruiz 2009; Fowler 2013: 546–50; Eidinow 2014: 80–2). The form of his name in Mycenaean Greek, *Mo-qo-so*, demonstrates that, originally, it is Greek not Anatolian (Oettinger 2007: 8–14; Yakubovich 2010: 154–6). Yet the name already occurs in the late fifteenth-century Hittite Maduwattas text of Boghazköy as *Mu-uk-šu-uš* (Beckman, Bryce, and Cline 2011: 94–5), who seems to

have been a Mycenaean leader (Yakubovich 2010: 154); and indeed, linguistic contact between Greece and Anatolia during the second millennium BCE is well attested (García Ramón 2011). In Greece, in the course of time, the name Moxos developed into Mopsos, following the normal development k^w> p (cf. Mycenaean *e-ko>hippos*), but the original form maintained itself in Lydia where the fifth-century Lydian historian Xanthos mentions an early Lydian king Moxos, even though this has become Mopsos in part of the manuscript tradition. The name occurs no less than four times among forty names in a later fourth-century BCE Ephesian inscription about the condemnation to death of inhabitants of Sardis; there even was a rather obscure Lydian city, Moxoupolis (Bremmer 2008: 142–3).

In the newly discovered inscription, the king himself, the late eighth-century Urikki, is said to be ‘an offspring of the house of Mopsos’, whereas the Luwian version calls him a ‘grandson of [Muk]sas’ (Yakubovich 2010: 155; Beckman, Bryce, and Cline 2011: 263–6). This Mopsos does not only carry a Greek name, but is also said to be the grandson of an ‘(Ah)hiyawan king’. Recent linguistic analysis confirms that Ahhiyawa was the Hittite name for the Mycenaean Greeks, as has long been suspected. This finding supports the long-standing view that Cilicia was colonized by early Greeks after the fall of the Hittite empire in the twelfth century BCE (Oreshko 2013). Evidently, the Phoenicians had heard the name in its later form, Mopsos, whereas the Luwians continued to call him by the older form Muksas. Clearly, Mopsos’ name stands at the crossroads of Greek, Phoenician, and Luwian traditions, which, in their entanglement, show us that we should be reticent in identifying cultural influences all too specifically and keep in mind the fluid nature of religious and other cultural transfers (rightly, López-Ruiz 2009: 498–9).

Finally, attention to poets, seers, and other religious specialists should not blind us to the possibility of other channels. As regards the transmission of gods, who, for example, was responsible for the transmission of Adonis to Greece? Given that his rituals were practised exclusively by women and are attested first in the work of a female poet (Sappho: fr. 140a, 168 Voigt), is it unthinkable that they were introduced from the Levant by wives of Greek merchants or mercenaries or even female Oriental slaves (West 1997: 618–21)? We will probably never know but the question should be posed.

INFLUENCE FROM PERSIA?

Although the influence of Persia on Greek religion has been the subject of more sustained argument only very recently (Burkert 2004: 99–124; Horky 2009), Heraklitos (fr. 22 DK) already ascribes a certain ritual influence to Persian *magoi*, as they are grouped together with all kinds of people practising initiations. As Ephesos had already been under Persian dominance for more than forty years at the time of Heraklitos' writing, and the priest of its main goddess, Artemis, even had acquired a Persian name, Megabyxos (Bremmer 2008: 353–6), these might have been 'freelance' *magoi* rather than official Persian priests. The gradual rise of the concept of 'magic' in the course of the later fifth century (Bremmer 2008: 235–48) supports the interpretation of these *magoi* as itinerant priests. The interpretation has gained weight with the publication of the Derveni Papyrus, which contains a most interesting description of a ritual practised by *magoi* in Athens at the turn of the fifth century (column 6.1–7):

> [. . .] libations and sacrifices appease the *artades*, 'those who possess the truth' (i.e. the ancestors), and the incantation of the *magoi* is able to drive away the *daimones* when they get in the way. *Daimones* are very able to get in the way of the souls. This is why the *magoi* perform the sacrifice, just as if they were paying a penalty. And on the offerings they pour water and milk, from which they also make the libations. (New text, Ferrari 2011: 75–7)

The text continues with further ritual details, but, for our purpose, it is enough to see that the *magoi* had not only preserved their rituals but even some of their traditional terminology, as *artades* is an old Zoroastrian term, deriving from west Iran (Brust 2005: 122–4). On the other hand, water libations were alien to Iranian religion: apparently, the *magoi* had adapted their ritual to that of the Greeks who did libate with water (Bremmer 2008: 245). Moreover, the fact that the *magoi* operated as if they had to pay a penalty brings them suspiciously close to the Orphics, who also promoted payments for the sins of the ancestors (Ferrari 2011: 79). The *magoi* seem to have tried to bring their ritual and message closer to what other itinerant priests, such as the Orpheotelests, had to offer at the time. This way of proceeding is, of course, not strange. Modern sociology of religion teaches us that new religions are the more successful the closer

they come to the existing ruling religions (Stark and Finke 2000). Evidently, the *magoi* had already learned this lesson.

CONCLUSION

Following the investigations of the last three decades, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the Ancient Near East influenced and enriched Greek religion. Yet this influence was not felt all over Greece or accepted in all Greek milieux. To give two examples: whereas Samos has been found to be a treasure full of Oriental goods and clearly was a kind of Archaic trading 'hub', neighbouring Chios has given us virtually no Oriental material (Gunter 2009: 129–30). Second example: whereas we might think that Hesiod had established an Oriental-influenced theogony as the ruling paradigm, early mythographers, except for Akousilaos (frr. 6–22 Fowler) and Pseudo-Epimenides (frr. 6–13 Fowler), only rarely referred to it; Lesbian poets do not even seem to have used it at all (West 2011: 392–407), although Lesbos (Hittite Lazpa) was an important interface between the (Neo-)Hittites and the Eastern Aegaean (Bremmer 2008: 317; Dale 2011; Teffeteller 2013; Dale forthcoming b). This rarity of the theogony makes its employment in Orphism perhaps even more significant: the poet whom the ancient Greeks called Orpheus clearly opted for a model that was not generally accepted.

Having established the general importance of the Ancient Near East for Greek religion, future research should thus look for the geographical and social spread of this influence, as well as for the modifications of that influence in the course of the transmission and reception. The problem of the Orient and its influence will not quickly find a satisfying solution.

SUGGESTED READING

For an excellent survey of the work by Burkert in this field, see Casadio 2009. In addition to Burkert and West, see, in general, Bremmer 2008, Lane Fox 2008, and López-Ruiz 2010, 2014, but also more specialized

studies, such as those by Bachvarova 2005, 2009, 2012; Bernabé 2004, 2006 [2004], 2008, 2011; Van Dongen 2007–2013; Petit 2011; Rollinger 2001, 2003, 2004, 2012; Rutherford 2006–2011; and Watkins (1933–2013) 2008. For the contacts between the Hittites and the Mycenaeans, Genz 2011: 303–9 is an up-to-date survey.

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CHAPTER 41

GRECO-EGYPTIAN RELIGION

KATHRIN KLEIBL*

INTRODUCTION

GREEK sources from the fifth century BCE show a strong interest in Egypt. Herodotos devoted a book of his *Histories* to the land on the Nile, paying particular attention to Egyptian religion, which he considered a source for true understanding of Greek cults. He identified the Egyptian goddess Isis with the Greek Demeter and Io, Osiris with Dionysos, Amun with Zeus, Horus with Apollo, Bastet with Artemis, and Hathor with Aphrodite (Hdt. 2.42ff.). All forms of divination, according to Herodotos, had originated in Egypt, as had the first major religious festivals and processions. He assumed the daughters of the Egyptian king Danaos brought the mysteries of the Greek goddess Demeter to Greece. He also stated that the teachings of the Orphics and Dionysiac mysteries came from Egypt, and that a certain Melampos imported the cult of Dionysos—with the procession of the phallos—into Greece.

In Egypt, during the Ptolemies' 300-year rule, the Greeks represented the ruling class. As a result, they grew closer to certain Egyptian gods, in particular, Osiris, Sarapis, Isis, Horus, and Anubis. Along with travelling

merchants, the Ptolemaic dynasty was a decisive driving force for the dissemination of these now-Hellenized Egyptian deities, which were clearly connected with the dynastic cult. Sarapis, a conflation of Osiris and the bull-god Apis, was raised to the status of the Ptolemaic dynastic god; his main sanctuary was built in Egyptian Alexandria (Stambaugh 1972; Kessler 1989: 56–101).

Archaeological evidence for the worship of Egyptian gods in Greek lands can be found in Athens from the fourth century BCE. Egyptians—probably sailors and merchants—were permitted to build a temple to Isis in the port of Piraeus (*RICIS* 101/0101). Sanctuaries in other port cities of the eastern Mediterranean soon followed; prominent examples are the three places of worship on the island of Delos (see further, in this volume, Scott, Chapter 16), and the sanctuary at Eretria in Euboia (Bricault 2001). Greco-Egyptian cult grew rapidly, first in the area of Greek culture, then in the western Mediterranean.

MYTH

No full text summarizing the myth of the Egyptian family of gods has survived from pharaonic times. In the first century CE, however, Plutarch recorded the story in the Greek treatise *On Isis and Osiris*. Relying mostly on Egyptian sources, he collected various pharaonic traditions, episodes, and 'images' into a homogenous myth in narrative form. One of the most important sections of the myth relates the resurrection of Osiris by Isis, after his murder by Seth, and the subsequent 'wedding of the dead' (Plut. *De Is. et Os*. 18). 'In tears', Isis collects all of Osiris' parts except for his phallos (eaten by the fish of the Nile), then seeks help from the jackal-headed Anubis, god of mummification. Together they revive Osiris, but not to full earthly life: he remains lord of the underworld, and the only part of him that returns to earth is a phallos, embodying fertility and the life force. Isis presents it to him during the following 'wedding of the dead', in which she appears as a female falcon to her husband in the realm of the dead, in order to produce another Horus child with him. This child is basically another manifestation of Horus, called Horus the Younger. Osiris

prepares his son Horus for vengeance and struggle against his murderer Seth—a struggle that Horus wins, thenceforth serving as ruler/pharaoh of Egypt (Plut. *De Is. et Os*. 19, 36, 38).

THE GRECO-EGYPTIAN PANTHEON

Osiris

In Egypt, Osiris is identified by name by the end of the fifth dynasty (Mojsov 2005; Kleibl 2009: 22). He was the god of the dead, for whom the first rites of death connected with an afterlife were performed. In the Middle Kingdom, Osiris began to be approximated to the Egyptian pharaoh and became king of the underworld. In late Egyptian times, Osiris was one of the most dominant gods of Egypt, standing hierarchically even above the pharaoh. He was worshipped especially as a fertility god, symbolizing the land of Egypt, and the crops of the land sprouted from his body. A particular aspect of Osiris was his identification with the water of the Nile, which was considered to be his semen. Osiris was thus the Nile, the giver of life to Egypt: he died when the Nile dried up and he was reborn when its flooding made the land fertile (Kleibl 2009: 154f.).

Osiris was not adopted into the Greco-Egyptian pantheon in his Egyptian form; for the Greeks, the representation of a dead god was unusual. Although he was identified by Herodotos with Dionysos, another 'Hellenized' god took Osiris' place beside the goddess Isis: the already-mentioned Sarapis.

Osiris was not worshipped outside Egypt as a 'physically tangible' deity, but he still had a symbolic role in cultic practice. He symbolized transformation and flow through his self-renewal and change. In their initiation into the community of faith—the mysteries—the followers of the Hellenized Isis cult relived the death and resurrection of Osiris in their own bodies. Although there were no cult images of Osiris, he was still honoured in his manifestation as water, as a second-century BCE dedication from Thessaloniki makes clear: Phylakides erected a temple to Osiris with

a hollow chamber containing water; in this chamber the god moves around in the ‘starlit night’ and brings joy to Isis. From the first century BCE, canopic jars containing the sacred waters of the Nile—vessels with the head of the god as a cover, called Osiris-Hydreios figures—were placed in the sanctuaries.

Isis

Isis is attested in Egyptian religion from around 2400 BCE in epigraphic sources, not as a goddess but as a priestess (Kleibl 2009: 20–2). The pyramid and coffin texts place Isis as a mourner at the foot of the bier during the embalming process, while her sister Nephthys stood at the head end. Isis’ deification during the fifth dynasty is associated with the appearance of Osiris. In the Middle Kingdom she was understood as the wife of the deceased ruler and pharaoh in the underworld. She was also recognized by ordinary Egyptians as the goddess of the dead.

In the New Kingdom, the chthonic role of Isis became that of a mother and sky deity. The pharaohs now referred to themselves as the sons of Isis, and her womb was regarded as a royal throne; her name means ‘throne’ or ‘seat’. In the nineteenth dynasty (1292–1190 BCE) the worship of Isis reached its first climax and she rose to the status of a universal goddess, absorbing the essence of the other Egyptian goddesses. Egyptian queens identified themselves with Isis, a tradition adopted by Ptolemaic rulers.

Greek religion of the fourth century BCE was particularly receptive to saviour deities with maternal, helping, or healing functions. Thanks to her universality, the Egyptian Isis, an all-embracing, transnational, trans-cultural, and trans-religious world goddess, was integrated with little difficulty into the Greco-Egyptian pantheon. Of particular importance in this connection are the aretalogies that concern self-revelations ‘put in the mouth of Isis’: a text that lists her miracles and characteristics. The aretalogies were inscribed on stelai in certain sanctuaries of gods outside Egypt, such as in Kyme (*RICIS* 302/0204), in Thessaloniki (*RICIS* 113/0545), in Thracian Maroneia (*RICIS* 114/0202), in Telmessos (*RICIS* 306/0201), and on Ios (*RICIS* 202/1101) and Andros (*IG* XII, 5 739); the earliest dates from the first century BCE, the latest from the third century CE. They purport to be ‘verbatim’ copies of a third-century BCE Memphian

archetype from the Temple of Hephaistos. One of these tablets was probably placed in each sanctuary outside Egypt and used in daily worship. Their textual style shows strong affinities with the hymns of Egyptian origin that were known to be sung by priests.

Horus/Harpokrates

Horus is the son of Isis and Osiris and an important member of the family of the gods. 'Horus the child'—*Har-pa-chered* in the original Egyptian—was Hellenized into Harpokrates. As in Egypt, in Greco-Roman culture, he was represented in human form as a child with his finger to his mouth. In Egypt this gesture was still considered a symbol of childhood, but the adherents of Greco-Egyptian cult interpreted it as an admonition to be silent about their initiation rites, about which no word should be spoken (Plut. *De Is. et Os*. 68; Ovid *Met*. 9.629).

Horus/Harpokrates is mentioned fairly frequently in epigraphic sources (*RICIS* 770, 773–5). Like his parents, he was the recipient of votive offerings and sacrifices. He also received sacrifices in common with Isis, Sarapis, and Osiris, in the spirit of family solidarity. In the Greco-Roman world, however, a separate place of worship was never built for Harpokrates. Sources do indicate that at least one temple structure was dedicated to him, in Amphipolis (*RICIS* 113/0905), but no archaeological traces have been found. It is likely that the dedication means that a chapel to Harpokrates was built within a sanctuary of Isis and Sarapis. This would be consistent with other places of worship (e.g. in the Iseion at Pompeii) dedicated to his divine parents, in which many chapels and cult niches are detectable.

Anubis

Jackal-headed Anubis is the god of mummification from the time of the Old Kingdom; in the desert he watched over the dead of the *anch-tawi* Necropolis, the cemetery of Memphis (Kleibl 2009: 278, 283). As a psychopomp (guide of the dead), he was an intermediary between this world and the next. He is the son of Seth and Nephthys, but accompanied

his foster-mother Isis in search of her missing husband Osiris, and later mummified his corpse. While Isis and Nephthys mourned the dead, Anubis performed the ‘mouth-opening ritual’ on the corpse, which allowed the *Ka* (a part of the soul) to return to the dead body; in Egypt it was assumed that, without the soul, the dead could not live on in the afterlife. In the Egyptian cult of the dead, Anubis (or a priest of Anubis) was always in charge of embalming and mummification. Later, in the Greco-Egyptian cult of the gods, the ‘mouth-opening ritual’ was still performed by priests to revive the cult statue.

In the so-called Egyptian ‘Osiris mysteries’, in which the search for Osiris became a cultic performance, a masked priest played the role of Anubis. A depiction from Dendera shows a priest in such a costume (Dendérah IV, table 31; Quack 2003: 61). The jackal-headed appearance of Anubis was also adopted by the Greco-Egyptian cult of the gods. A priest masked as the jackal-headed Anubis is shown in various depictions of the Isis procession. The leading position of Anubis in the processions is also shown by his display in the calendar as a symbol for certain feast days.

Herodotos refers to Anubis in connection with embalming rituals in Egypt, but does not mention his name or equate him with any Greek god (Hdt. 2.86.2.3–7). In the Greek world, however, there was a tradition of his identification with Hermes, who also functioned as a psychopomp; he was often called Hermanubis. In a divergence from the Egyptian myth as related by Plutarch, a Bithynian hymn (found in Kios) to Anubis from the first century CE calls him the son of Isis and Osiris-Sarapis (SIRIS 325). Worship of Anubis outside Egypt is demonstrable only in the context of Greco-Egyptian cult: there were no shrines built especially for Anubis.

Sarapis

The old view that Sarapis was a god artificially created by the Ptolemies is no longer tenable in light of present research (Hornborstel 1973; Mayr 2001). The thesis that the archetype of Sarapis came from Sinope on the Black Sea coast, and stood as godfather for later representations of the deity, has also been proven to be wrong. The epithet ‘Sinopion’ was erroneously derived by ancient authors from Sinope, and in fact refers to the area in Egyptian Memphis where there was a Sarapeion. It is thus an

indication of an Egyptian origin for Sarapis, and Sarapis should be understood as resulting from a pre-existing, evolving syncretism, probably beginning in pre-Ptolemaic times, and then promoted by Ptolemy I Soter (304–283/2 BCE; see Mayr 2001). Sarapis was a special manifestation of Osiris or the underworld God Oser-Apis, who came from Memphis and appeared there as a bull. Therefore, Sarapis stood originally for the dead Apis bulls that became Osiris after they died. In Sarapis, the Egyptian gods Osiris, Apis (Ptah of Memphis), Amun, and Ra were united in one form; thus he, like Osiris, was a god of the dead and of fertility.

With the transfer of his cult to Alexandria around 320 BCE, Sarapis was also worshipped as the king of the gods: his function was now to legitimize the rule of the Ptolemies—wholly in the tradition of the Theban Amun-Ra as god of the realm. Isis was placed at his side as his wife, and, together with Horus/Harpokrates, they formed the Greco-Egyptian divine trinity. The Ptolemies also worshipped Sarapis as the lord of eternity and time, seeing him as the arbiter of fate and as an oracle god, and giving him equal status with Zeus, Hades, Dionysos, and Asklepios.

Sarapis' appearance also supplies information about his Greco-Egyptian nature. Usually he sits on a throne, with a sceptre in his left hand, a *kalathos* or harvest basket as a crown, and three-headed Kerberos at his feet. These insignia of power identify him as king of the gods. The harvest basket is a fertility symbol marking him as the god of grain; Kerberos—the guardian of the underworld in Greek mythology—takes up the Egyptian origin of the god (Osiris as ruler of the underworld). But while the Hellenistic iconography of Sarapis certainly refers to Egyptian thought, it shows no similarity with traditional ancient Egyptian representations of Osiris. Though in nature an Egyptian god, Sarapis was completely Hellenized in outward form.

Sarapis is thus a god without a mythological history, an unusual condition in both Egyptian and Greek religion. His cult was important mainly for the Greek population of Egypt. The Egyptians themselves took little interest in him; especially in the rural areas of Egypt, Sarapis remained the foreign god of the Greeks. Nevertheless, a socio-political commitment to integrate Egyptian and Greek traditions can certainly be recognized in the Ptolemies' development and promotion of the cult of Sarapis.

GRECO-EGYPTIAN CULT

In the Greek world, Greco-Egyptian cult was first practiced in private. Elements from ancient Egyptian religion were integrated into the familiar repertoire of Greek religion, without greatly violating its nature. Such an adaptation of the unknown to the known is also reflected in the architecture of places of worship.

Places of Worship

The architecture of Greco-Egyptian sanctuaries was initially oriented to the Hellenistic architectural tradition (Kleibl 2009: 48–130), drawing on an astonishing range of building types. Neither the temples nor the other elements of Greco-Egyptian sanctuaries were characterized by a unique architectural language. Nevertheless, there are some special features of Greco-Egyptian sanctuaries that distinguish them from those of Greek deities; they derive primarily from the example of ancient Egyptian temples. Thus, the sanctuaries of Greco-Egyptian gods—like most temples of Egyptian gods—were situated in urban contexts. In Hellenistic times, the sanctuaries were integrated into residential areas and had a partly private character. They came to be built in harbours, in commercial districts, or right in the centres of urban life, suggesting that their religious communities consisted mostly of merchants and sailors. The situation was different only in Egypt itself, where Greco-Egyptian cult was connected with the Ptolemaic dynasty. Not until the official recognition of the Greco-Egyptian gods outside Egypt did the cult gain adherents among other, native social classes—a development that, in Roman times, led eventually to its reconnection with the cult of the ruler.

The orientation of Greco-Egyptian temples played no important role in cultic practice; only a very rough orientation of religious buildings to the south and east is observable. As in ancient Egyptian sanctuaries, the availability of a water source was more important, as demonstrated by the numerous waterworks installed in the *temenoi* (sanctuaries; sing. *temenos*).

Like the Egyptian temples, almost all the sanctuaries had a sacred area completely shielded by a high wall from the outer, profane world. The effect of the sanctuary on its surroundings was limited to its front entrance: these sometimes powerful pylon-like structures were derived from either Egyptian models or the elaborate *propylaia* (gateways) of Greek architecture. Outwardly, most Greco-Egyptian sanctuaries were architecturally indistinguishable from the places of worship of other deities. Only an inscription placed over the entrance, a floor mosaic, or statues made reference to the gods worshipped in the *temenos*. There were also pools at the entrance, from which water for the symbolic cleansing of believers was drawn before they entered the sanctuary—this was particularly characteristic of Greco-Egyptian religion.

The temple and its courtyard dominated the inside of the sanctuary. Nearly all such facilities had courts or open spaces in which worshippers could assemble for the 'morning opening of the temple', sacrifices, and other rituals. These courts were built to many different designs, but were often shaped as wide peristyle courts, very like those of Egyptian temples. They also shared this aspect: one side of the temple was flanked by the *temenos* wall or by the portico, so that the gaze of the community could be focused on it. On the other hand, almost all temples were pushed to the rear of the sanctuary, sometimes even beyond the surrounding *temenos* wall, so that the courtyards occupied a far larger area than the temple. This arrangement stressed the importance of the meeting place and gave more space to the forecourt.

The courts could serve as an auditorium from which events in the temple could be followed and the cult image seen. In the Greco-Egyptian cult of the gods, awareness of the threshold, a transition region, is of essential importance: for the adherent of the cult, all of life depended on this threshold. The court not only functioned as a meeting place for worshippers, but was also the space in which this intermediate state was ritually manifested. Thus, the courts were generally left open—if they were locked up this was infrequently—and this is why there was a requirement for clearly marked religious boundaries, in order to manage the potential invasiveness of the profane.

Also remarkable is the predominance (for religious reasons) of secondary buildings over somewhat smaller religious structures. With regard to decoration, the elaborate design of the courtyard area, the

exterior of the temple, the side chapels, and meeting places is striking, while other spaces seem to have been rather neglected. This focus on the public area of the sanctuary, at the expense of other areas, probably simply reflects the usual location of the worshippers; the side rooms that they did not enter did not require elaborate decoration.

The temples of Greco-Egyptian shrines were modelled on Greek building types modified only by local and temporal peculiarities. Therefore, the size of the temple varies enormously, between 13 m^2 and 1412 m^2. In Hellenistic times, the prevailing forms are the *templum in antis* (the simplest type of temple, a rectangular structure with projecting side walls forming a porch before the main hall), and the *naos* (the inner chamber of a temple) with surrounding *peristasis* (a four-sided colonnade). The main temples had the function of protecting the cult image and housing religious objects and votive offerings. Large temples offered cult adherents the opportunity to participate in worship within the temple. All temples of the Greco-Egyptian gods show a clear focus on the front of the building. Porticoes could be designed differently, but they all served as ‘stages’ on which priests could carry out ritual acts before worshippers standing in the courtyard. These areas in front of all temples offered sufficient space for the placement of religious images and for the carrying out of ritual activities. Directly before the temple or in its *pronaos* (the inner area of the portico of the temple, resembling an entrance hall) there were benches for the assembled priests or other religious personnel.

To the *pronaos* was connected the *cella* (the main inner chamber of the temple), which overlooked a broad entrance and could be closed off by shutting a door; the cult image was set up on a raised platform against its back wall. If the temple was orientated to the east or south, the image was illuminated by the sun when the temple was opened in the morning. In deep *cellae* and large hall temples, special lighting effects could also be created by means of small windows, skylights, reflective flooring, water basins, or wall coverings, possibly made of glass. The door openings allowed the worshippers to look from the courtyard into the *cella*. Between 1200 and 1400m^2 in area, the *cella* was normally a rectangle with its narrow axis to the front, although some temples featured a rectangular *cella* presenting its long axis, a design probably intended to allow as many people as possible to see the inner sanctum from the courtyard. The

different sizes of the *cellae* reflect different temple functions. In temples with smaller *cellae*, worshippers could not enter, but gathered in the yard in front of the sacred building. Half of the rituals were therefore carried out with the community excluded, while the other half took place in the forecourt of the temple. In religious buildings with a large *cella*, such as hall temples, worshippers could follow the rites inside the temple itself.

Additional equipment and closets for cult images—(for which it is more difficult to find evidence in the small *cellae*)—indicate the performance of special rituals. In some *cellae*, water basins have been found below or in front of the cult image platform, as well as gutters, channels, and basins in the inner chamber. These allowed fluids from sacrificial victims and water used by temple servants for daily cleaning of the cult statues to run off directly, but they also formed visible barriers, marking the limits of contact with the cult image for the unauthorized. Stepped pools and tubs in the inner rooms of *cellae* indicate the performance of ritual purifications, apparently associated with initiations.

In the cavities of the bases of some cult images, objects have been found that suggest repositories for cult apparatus or reference libraries. In addition to utensils used for the daily cleaning and adornment of the cult image, these hollows held scrolls containing the most important liturgical texts and ritual prescriptions. In some temples there were also spaces within the base of the temple, in which—as in the subterranean crypts of Egyptian temples—cult objects were stored.

The cult image stood at the back wall of the *cella*, elevated and orientated on the axis of the temple, so that the god looked towards the door and into the court beyond. The higher position of Greco-Egyptian cult images is analogous to the position of those in ancient Egyptian temples, where the floor level also rises continually up to the *naos* with its cult image. Thus, in both the Egyptian and Greco-Egyptian temple there is a rising, sacred topography: forecourt–*cella*–cult image. The connection between the area in front—a courtyard or a separate area within the *cella*—and the cult image in the temple interior allowed direct communication (previously unthinkable in Egypt) between simple worshippers and the divine in sanctuaries of Greco-Egyptian gods. This made the courtyard a richly equipped space for the community, with a fitting backdrop created by the combination of Hellenistic–Roman decoration with Egyptian and Egyptianizing elements. The designs and sacred symbols in the courtyard

also served as religious instruction by establishing a connection to the cult practices and the myths of the Greco-Egyptian gods.

Sanctuaries of Greco-Egyptian gods also always had side chapels, for the worship of gods associated with the chief deity of the temple. These were usually separate structures, but in the immediate vicinity of the main temple. If integrated into other rooms, they lay mostly near or directly behind the temple. If reduced to niches, they were inserted into the portico surrounding the courtyard. There were also chapels in the entrance area, which worshippers could visit before entering the main courtyard. At the back of a few temples could be found ‘hearing ear’ chapels, known from the temples of Egypt, which allowed the ordinary worshipper to approach the deity directly. It is also possible that they were the site for the oracular consultations known from epigraphic sources, which could deal with religious, hierarchical, political, legal, and private matters.

The water crypts discovered in some sanctuaries are specific to Greco-Egyptian cult. Their placement within the sacral topography was probably unimportant; what mattered was that they were of limited access and underground. In their function they resembled the Egyptian nilometer or pseudo-nilometer: in these water crypts (Nile) water was stored for religious purposes, which included the daily cleansing of the temple as well as rites of initiation, in which the Nile water made possible a mystic identification with Osiris.

Dining rooms and meeting halls can also be found in the sanctuaries. Some had benches that ran around the perimeter, which are also known from comparable spaces in late Egyptian temples. In their architecture these rooms do not differ from those of other Greek temples of the time, but their sometimes very elaborate cultic apparatus gives them a specific character. The design of the assembly rooms in the sanctuaries of Greco-Egyptian gods is fairly flexible, depending on the space, financial resources, and needs of particular communities. In sanctuaries without separate meeting rooms, courtyards, and porticoes probably served as places of assembly.

Rites and Practices

Participation in Greco-Egyptian cult was connected, for its worshippers, with initiation into mysteries (Kleibl 2009: 142–5), which marked a clear boundary for unbelievers. The architecture of many sanctuaries already differentiated the cult from the outer world, creating a clearly defined area and a sense of belonging to a community of faith. Accordingly, the courtyard of the sanctuary, and the rituals held within them, were accessible only to members and those who aspired to join them.

One of these daily rituals was the 'morning opening of the temple' (Kleibl 2009: 131–3). Its sequence, like the 'ritual of the hours', was taken over from Egyptian religion. Before its performance, the priests washed in shallow water basins, corresponding to the cleansing pool of the priesthood in Egyptian sanctuaries. Then a priest awakened the cult image in the holy of holies of the temple. By means of the 'opening-mouth ritual' adopted from Egypt, the image of the god was transformed into a living, present deity. It was fed, washed, painted, dressed, and made part of a theatrical production (the *hypostoloi* or *stolists* assumed the duty of caring for the image, see Kleibl 2009: 159); in order to be transported in rituals and processions, the statues were mostly smaller than life size. Thus animated, the cult images made the gods accessible and touchable.

After this ritual, special hymns were sung at the morning opening of the temple, in the court area, by priests and *aretalogoi* (Kleibl 2009: 157–8); fresh (Nile) water for libation vessels was drawn from water crypts, wells, or cisterns. At the main altar—which could be designed as a 'horn altar'—and at numerous smaller altars, sacrifices were performed in sacrificial pits and areas. In Egypt, these rituals took place mostly in the temple, but here benches were set up in the court area and the porticoes. The rites were accompanied by singers and musicians with sistrum, flute, trumpet, tympanum, harp, and bells. The sistrum is especially characteristic of cult of Greco-Egyptian gods (Kleibl 2009: 148–50); like the long flutes and the funnel-shaped trumpets, it was taken over from the cult of Hathor, which also came from Egypt.

In accordance with the Egyptian model, sacrifice was offered by a senior priest, assisted by *pastophoroi* (auxiliary priests). Before some altars there were front steps that raised the priest and his activity above the religious community. In addition to the main altar, the raised *pronaoi* of some sacred buildings probably served as a religious stage for all the visible performances of sacrifice. The offerings consisted mainly of

cereals, fruit cakes, dates, figs, pineapples, hens' eggs, a milk–honey mixture, water, geese, chickens, and, more rarely, cattle. The air was purified with incense and other aromatic material burned on the altars and in special censers (Kleibl 2009: 150–1); along with resins, frankincense, and myrrh, the Egyptian *kyphi* (a highly prized incense) was also used. All these actions took place with the worshippers gathered in the courtyard. Their participation in the daily, monotonously repetitive rituals not only made the myth manifest, but also created a sense of communal belonging. Not all the rituals and ceremonies of Greco-Egyptian cult were connected with secret initiation into mysteries. Elaborate and spectacular processions also took place in public civic and harbour areas on the occasion of annual festivals (Kleibl 2009: 139–42). These gave non-initiates a look at the unfamiliar cult, and allowed the community to recruit potential members.

The calendar of Greco-Egyptian cult had several annual festivals: the New Year's Festival, the Inventio Osirides (or Isia, a festival that honoured Isis' search for and discovery of Osiris) and the Navigium Isidis ('navigation of Isis'; Kleibl 2009: 139–42). These celebrations were rooted in the temple festivals of the ancient Egyptian sanctuaries. The New Year's festival had forerunners in the festivals of Isis-Sothis and of Sokar-Osiris, celebrated in Egypt in mid-July, on the day of the highest flooding of the Nile. The Inventio Osirides or Isia had its origin in the Egyptian 'mysteries' of Osiris. During the celebrations, the Egyptian myth of Isis and Osiris was staged to commemorate the resurrection of the god. The Navigium Isidis festival—which opened the seafaring season in March—was celebrated for the first time in the Ptolemaic period in Canopus, near Alexandria, and involved the worship of Isis as patroness of sailing. Processions within and outside the sanctuaries were an integral part of all these festivals. Apuleius gives a detailed description of the Navigium Isidis: in the accompanying sacrifices a vessel of (Nile) water, along with banners, was presented. In all cultic celebrations, great importance was given to dramas in which priests assumed the roles of gods, making the myth visible to the faithful. The large, lake-like pools in the courtyards—a parallel to the holy lakes of Egyptian temples—served as performance spaces for such productions, in which the worshippers could identify with Osiris as well as with Isis. All festivities ended with a meal shared by the worshippers in the courtyard or one of the dining rooms.

CULT PARTICIPANTS

Mysteries and Initiation

Before being accepted into the community, the adherent of Greco-Egyptian cult had to undergo an initiation into the dogma of the faith, the so-called mysteries: first, initiation into the Isis mysteries, then a second initiation, that of Osiris, which allowed the faithful to assume priestly duties; a fee was charged for both initiations (Kleibl 2009: 142–5).

Apuleius provides essential information on the Isis mysteries in the eleventh book of his *Metamorphoses* (second century CE), where he gives an idealized description of a sanctuary in Kenchreai in Greece (Kleibl 2009: 25–8). About its actual contents he is silent—as befits a secret. Before being initiated, the candidate was instructed in the religion, probably in the sanctuary itself, where depictions of teaching and indications of reference libraries have been found. The neophyte had to perform menial services in the temple before the initiation (*Met*. 11.21.1), to guard against impatience and disobedience (11.21.6), and had to live abstemiously, renouncing unclean and sinful food (11.21.9). Those who wished 'after the completion of life and on the threshold of being . . . to be, in a sense, reborn to a new existence' (11.21.7) were initiated. The instructions were carried out during the subsequent initiation 'in voluntary surrender to death and salvation by grace' (11.21.7). The goddess Isis announced the time and cost of the initiation ceremony in a dream.

According to Apuleius, the community came to the shrine at night to present the neophyte with gifts of honour; the discovery of stores of lamps and torches confirms these nocturnal rituals. Dressed in new garments of white linen, the initiate was led by the priest into the holy of holies. Apuleius explains what happens next using imagery: 'I approached the border of death, trod the threshold of Proserpine, was carried back through all the elements; at midnight I saw the sun blazing with a white light; I approached the gods of the underworld and of heaven face to face, and worshipped them at close range' (11.23.7). The initiate had to pass symbolically through the twelve gates of the underworld, a ritual that refers to the underworld journey of the Egyptian god Ra. The religious

rebirth of the initiate may have taken place in the water crypts, into which he descended at night, to begin, at daybreak, a new life consecrated to the god. On the morning after the initiation, the initiate, clothed in finely embroidered linen, was placed on a wooden platform before the cult image in the temple. A precious mantle hung on his shoulders, decorated with all kinds of fabulous creatures—comparison with the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* leads to new understanding of the choice of motifs. 'When I was thus adorned like the sun and set up like a statue, the veils suddenly parted, and the people pressed in to see me' (11.24.4). The day was celebrated with a meal and festivities.

Candidates could be initiated into the Osiris mysteries only once a year. Apuleius describes it, but only in hints, as it were. Living later in Rome, Lucius is invited in a dream to a second initiation, one year after his first one: he was not yet 'illumined by the rites of the great god and the greatest father of the gods, unconquered Osiris. For although these deities and faiths were connected, indeed united, there was nonetheless a great difference in the initiation' (11.27.2ff.). In the dream an initiate appears to him, who lays *thyrsoi*, ivy fronds, and other secret attributes before his house altar and announces a solemn meal; according to Apuleius, these festivities were connected with great financial expenditure. After a period of abstinence and the shaving of the head, 'I was illumined by the nocturnal rites of the first among the gods and applied myself with full devotion to the holy worship of the kindred religion' (11.28.5).

Religious Communities

Some believers of the communities came together to form internal groups (Kleibl 2009: 162–6). These cliques—Melanephoroi, Therapeutai, Isiastai, Sarapiastai, Anubiastai, Osiriastai, and so on—functioned primarily as religious communities, but there were also groups with largely social and economic purposes. They met for meals to honour the gods in the meeting places and dining rooms of the sanctuary, and discussed community concerns, such as the construction and maintenance of the facility. As an example we may cite the sanctuary in Ostia, which has extensive dining and meeting rooms (Kleibl 2009: cat. 28 Ostia 272–6). In the courtyard of the sanctuary there were *thesauroi* containing various votive offerings—

small altars, divine images, statues of the donor, statuettes, or votive tablets given by individuals or groups. The collective feeling arising from dedicating statues, sharing meals, and so on, had both religious and socio-political dimensions.

Cult Personnel

Greco-Egyptian cult personnel were organized hierarchically—priests, *pastophoroi* (assistant priests), and other functionaries (Kleibl 2009: 157–61). Originally, the priests were still Egyptian-born, passing their knowledge down to their sons, who would take up the office (e.g. on Delos: *RICIS* 202/0101). In late Hellenistic times there could also be non-Egyptian priests, as long as they fulfilled certain requirements: to be ordained, candidates had to complete a multistage initiation ritual adopted from Egypt.

The more highly placed functionaries of Greco-Egyptian cult had shaved heads and clean-shaven faces, like Egyptian priests. They were clothed with a robe knotted over the chest, a fringed shawl, and shoes probably made from palm or papyrus fibres, according to ancient Egyptian tradition. The task of the priests was to perform the liturgies and rites in a traditional manner. In some sanctuaries, the priests were supported by prophets (*prophetes*), who also understood the sacred teachings, but had to manage the finances of the sanctuary. The *pastophoroi*, however, were recruited from the indigenous population from the beginning, but had to undergo an initiation like that of the priests to qualify for their office. The main task of the *pastophoroi* was to carry the cult image (hence their designation as shrine porters). They also had the duty of keeping the cult apparatus and the privilege of being able to enter the *cella* of the temple. Under the *pastophoroi* in rank stood the *hypostoloi*, also known as *stolists* or *hierostolists*. They served the cult image, washing, anointing, and dressing the statue, as in ancient Egyptian ritual. This office was drawn from the indigenous population and was one of the few in Greco-Egyptian cult that could be assumed by women.

From the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius we know that a *grammateus*—a sort of secretary—invited the *pastophoroi* to a gathering after the New Year. In the mural in the portico of the Iseum at Pompeii, the scribe wears

a feather on his temple, probably a reminder that a hawk brought the priests of Thebes a scroll wrapped with a red ribbon containing the rules of the cult. Hence, it is assumed that the scribes were generally Egyptians, a supposition confirmed by an inscription from Aquileia in which a male *hierogrammateus* is called Arnouphis of Egypt. *Oneirokritai*—dream interpreters—are mentioned in inscriptions from Athens, Sarapeion C on Delos, and Tomi; they evaluated the dreams of cult members and initiates, and also determined the timing of initiation, as with Lucius in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius.

Aretalogoi (orators) were the priests who sang the hymns in the rituals; they are known from Athens, from Sarapeion C on Delos, and later from Rome. *Neokoroi* (temple guards) and *zakoroi* (temple workers) certainly represented the lowest-ranking staff in the sanctuaries, but their tasks were still important: they stood in the sacred area, monitored access to the sanctuary, and maintained order. Initially chosen to hold office only for a year, they could later be appointed for several consecutive years.

CONCLUSION

The adherents of Greco-Egyptian cult entered, as it were, a parallel world. Shrine porters, priests, scribes, initiates, and simple believers all played their part in staging an effect of absolute power. Within the sanctuary was manifested a force more potent than the commonly known gods. Greco-Egyptian cult promised a righteous life without class differences and gave believers hope of existence after death.

How attractive and captivating Greco-Egyptian cult was, even in its decline, is shown by a text from the fourth century CE, which, on the one hand, is written in the style of the ancient Egyptian Isis aretalogies and thus reveals an unbroken tradition, but, on the other, apostrophizes a present, current, and all-embracing deity. What Apuleius presents as a harmless story with touches of burlesque—the transformation of an ass into a man—can be recognized in its full force in this Christian spell (London Magical Papyrus No. 46):

> I am the truth, full of revulsion against the misdeeds in the world. I am what makes lightning [here magical words are inserted] and thunder. I am he whose sweat falls as a rain on the earth to fertilize it. I am he whose mouth is utterly in flames. I am what produces and reproduces. I am the grace of the world's age.

Suggested Reading

On the cult in general, see Vidman 1970, Witt 1971, Solmsen 1979, Bricault 2013. Cartography: Bricault 2001. Archaeology: Kleibl 2009. Iconography: individual gods in *LIMC*. Literary sources: Griffiths 1970 and 1975, Burton 1972, Merkelbach 1995. Epigraphical sources: Vidman 1969, Totti 1985, Bricault 2005 (addenda in Bricault and Veymiers 2008). Numismatics: Bricault 2008.

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* Translation: Jay Kardan.

CHAPTER 42

BACTRIA AND INDIA

RACHEL MAIRS

> It would seem that the Greek gods in India, though they remained as official coin-types or material for artists, had little enough to do with the religion of the people . . . it cannot be said how far Heracles and Dionysus were merely Krishna and Siva, and certainly Zeus was almost always the elephant-god of Kapisa. (Tarn 1951 [1938]: 392)

INTRODUCTION

AT the time of the publication of Tarn's monumental *The Greeks in Bactria and India* in 1938 there was little or no archaeological or epigraphic evidence for the religious practices of the inhabitants of the Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kingdoms. This situation has changed dramatically. Most of the sites and monuments discussed in this chapter began to be excavated only in the mid- to late-twentieth century, and some unprovenanced finds, especially of inscriptions, were first published only in the 2000s. However, Tarn's hunch that the 'Greek' gods of the easternmost Hellenistic states may have been known under different names by different constituencies has, if anything, been confirmed.

The Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek states are not well documented in the extant historical sources. The majority of their kings are known only from their coins (for discussion see Holt 2012, and for examples, the catalogues Bopearachchi 1991 and 1998). Establishing a firm chronology is therefore difficult. A few significant dates may, however, be borne in mind. In the 320s BCE, Alexander campaigned through Bactria and north-western India, and established a number of garrison settlements populated by Greek and Macedonian soldiers. In a treaty of 303 BCE, the lands south of the Hindu Kush (Arachosia and north-west India) were ceded by Seleukos I to the Indian emperor Chandragupta Maurya. The remaining Greek settlements north of the Hindu Kush, in Bactria, remained nominally part of the Seleukid empire until the mid-third century BCE, when they became independent under a local Greek dynasty, the Diodotids. By the turn of the third–second century BCE, the Greek kings of Bactria who succeeded the Diodotids were powerful enough to undertake military campaigns into Arachosia and India, recapturing many of the territories lost in the treaty of 303. Around the 140s BCE, Bactria itself was lost to a fatal combination of nomadic incursions, war with Parthia, and internal dynastic strife. However, the politically fragmented Indo-Greek states survived, some perhaps as late as the turn of the Common Era.

Against the inclusion of a chapter on the Hellenistic kingdoms of Bactria and India in a work on Greek religion, it might be objected that both the Greekness of the inhabitants of these kingdoms, and the Greekness of their religions are questionable. The former point can essentially be dismissed: the descendants of Alexander's settlers, who maintained, to some extent, Greek language and customs in the East, considered themselves to be Greek, and were described as such by their neighbours; for example, a 'Greek ambassador' to the court of an Indian king will be introduced in the section 'Arachosia and India', below. The Greekness of Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek religion is, however, more difficult to defend. The religious practices of people who asserted, in public discourse, and especially political imagery, a connection with Greeks and Greece were diverse. Greek gods were depicted on coins and temple images, but whether in the use of Near Eastern temple designs or in the dedication of Buddhist relics, Greek cults were only part of the religious constellation of the region.

In the following discussion, I aim to approach the religious practices of the Greek or Greek-dominated communities of the 'Hellenistic Far East' with as few ethno-cultural assumptions as possible. My emphasis will be on the multiplicity of cult practices at religious sites, the various names and meanings that might be attached to the same images and practices by different constituencies, and the political purposes for which religious imagery might be employed. This material illustrates the diversity of what we might think of as 'Greek' religious practice, and also the degree of innovation and evolution that might take place, especially in zones of contact with other cultures and religious traditions.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Bactria

Most of our evidence for religious practice in the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom derives from eastern Bactria (modern north-eastern Afghanistan and southern Tajikistan), because this is the region in which the greatest number of sites of the third and second centuries BCE have been excavated. (The material from and literature on these sites is reviewed in Mairs 2011.) The capital, at Bactra (modern Balkh, near Mazar-i-Sharif), has not yet been thoroughly excavated. The two most important sites for our purposes are Ai Khanoum and Takht-i Sangin, both of which were settlements situated at junctions of tributaries with the river Oxus.

At Ai Khanoum, a city which was occupied from the late fourth/early third century BCE to the 140s BCE, we have two excavated temples (Mairs 2011, 2013). The city's main temple, set within a walled sanctuary where evidence of ritual practice includes small limestone altars and vases for chthonic libations, was built on a Near Eastern architectural model, with a distinctive stepped niche decoration on its outer walls. What is preserved of the main cult statue, on the other hand, is Greek in style. The thunderbolt motif on the statue's sandal suggests that it represented a

Zeus, perhaps syncretized with a local god (Grenet 1991). The second temple at Ai Khanoum lay just outside the city walls and had the same niched decoration as the intramural temple. Nothing has been preserved of its ritual equipment or divine image(s).

Ai Khanoum had other loci of cult activity, outside the formal temples. On the city's natural acropolis, a small open-air altar, set on a stepped podium, was oriented for offering towards the rising sun, a practice which has been linked to similar Iranian rites (Boyce and Grenet 1991: 181–3, who also discuss possible local comparanda). The gymnasium contained a Greek dedicatory inscription to Hermes and Herakles. The shrine of the city's founder, Kineas, contained a lengthy Greek inscription, only a fragment of which is preserved, of Delphic maxims, which states that it was set up in Kineas' *temenos* (Rougemont 2012: nos 97–8; Robert 1968 is the *editio princeps* of both the gymnasium and shrine of Kineas inscriptions). Some of the city's dead were interred in mausolea outside the city walls, with Greek inscriptions and sculptural decoration. Most of these inscriptions are very brief, confined to the deceased's name, but two longer, although again very fragmentary, texts have recently been published by Rougemont (2012: nos 136–7). A fragmentary Greek epitaph from another Bactrian site, Djiga-tepe (close to Dilberjin, see below), belonged to a man named Diogenes and makes reference to Hades (Rougemont 2012: no. 91).

The 'Temple of the Oxus' at Takht-i Sangin, downstream from Ai Khanoum on the Tajik bank of the river, around 100km as the crow flies, has yielded a much larger range of cult equipment than the Ai Khanoum temples, although analysis of the cult practice there remains problematic. (See Litvinskij and Pičikjan 2002 for an introduction to the site; there is a good, concise summary of the principal points of debate about the function and identification of the temple in Grenet 2005.) Comparatively little has been excavated of the surrounding settlement. The temple itself stood within a fortified sanctuary. Subsidiary corridors within the main temple building have yielded large numbers of dedicatory offerings. The deified river Oxus was the principal cult object. We find a dedication to the river, in Greek, on a small altar bearing a statuette of a satyr playing a double flute: 'Votive, dedicated by Atrosokes, to the Oxus' (Rougemont 2012: no. 95). More items from the site bearing brief Oxus dedications have recently come to light, testifying to continuity in cult practice during and after the

fall of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom in the mid-second century BCE (Rougemont 2012: nos 95–6; Drujinina and Lindström 2013). Theophoric Oxus names were especially popular in the region at all periods for which we have documentation.

Among the offerings in the temple caches, we find a large number of weapons, ivories (some of them in Greek style, or of Greek subjects, such as Herakles), gold plaques portraying worshippers, and items depicting mythical creatures, including an appropriately aquatically themed 'hippocampess' (Litvinskij and Pičikjan 1995). There is considerable controversy over whether, in addition, the Temple of the Oxus might be identified as a Zoroastrian fire temple. (See the discussion of Boyce and Grenet 1991: 173–9; Bernard 1994; and the note on the topic in Grenet 2005.) Two small chambers filled with ashes and altars were excavated in the wings of the main temple building, which led to this suggestion by the excavators. The matter remains open for debate but, as with the temples at Ai Khanoum, I would emphasize the diversity of the forms of cult activity that took place within this single space, and the multiplicity of interpretations that may have been attached to the cult.

Even the most overtly 'Greek' images and practices may have been read in different ways by different constituencies; two more Bactrian examples bear this out. A Greek inscription found in the region of Kuliab, in southern Tajikistan, contains the dedication of a man named Heliodotos to Hestia, in a grove (*alsos*) of Zeus, for the sake of King Euthydemos (reigned *c*.230–200 BCE) and his son Demetrios. The stone is unprovenanced, so we know nothing of the cult place that, in Greek, is termed the 'grove of Zeus'. We do not know whether there was a temple building, and statues of the gods, or, if there were, what they looked like. Nor do we know the forms of cult practice took place there; nor, perhaps most importantly, whether the 'Zeus' and 'Hestia' of Heliodotos' inscription were known by different names by different worshippers.

Another Bactrian site where superficially 'Greek' signals permit different readings is Dilberjin, a town in the Bactra oasis, and its 'Temple of the Dioskouroi'. (See Kruglikova 1977, although it should be noted that the chronology of the site has been much debated.) Although both town and temple may have existed in the Greco-Bactrian period, the excavated remains date, for the most part, to the Kushan period, the early centuries CE. It nevertheless provides useful testimony to the durability of Greek

divine imagery, although perhaps not religion, two centuries or more after the fall of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom. A wall painting in the temple's vestibule depicts the Dioskouroi, standing next to their horses, holding their bridles, and wearing their characteristic *pilos* caps. The iconography is recognizably Greek, but it is unaccompanied by any textual indication of the names by which these figures were known. It is possible that the images of the Dioskouroi, and an 'Athena' on a wall painting from the same temple, were inherited from their appearance on Greco-Bactrian coinage (Kruglikova 1977: 409, 421; Grenet 1987a; on Greco-Bactrian coins as the source for later religious iconography, see Boyce and Grenet 1991: 161).

I shall return to the topic of divine images on Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins in 'Religious Iconography', below. Like coins, engraved gems depicting Classical figures, even with legends in Greek, were small, portable, and of sufficient intrinsic value to ensure that they might be passed from hand to hand over long distances and time periods. For example, a ring from Tomb II at Tillya Tepe (a collection of nomadic tombs in Bactria, dating to the first century BCE) contains a gem depicting Athena, captioned in Greek, in a gold setting (Hiebert and Cambon 2011: 242, no. 55).

Arachosia and India

The evidence for religious practice in the Greek communities and states of Arachosia and India is more heavily weighted towards the epigraphic than the archaeological. Although archaeological investigations were carried out at the site of Old Kandahar (ancient Alexandria in Arachosia) in the 1970s, the city remains little known. However, the small number of inscriptions discovered at the site give a disproportionately rich level of insight into both the local religious practices of its inhabitants and attempts by an Indian emperor to introduce them to the teachings of Buddhism. I will introduce the evidence for Buddhism at Old Kandahar below in Buddhism, and restrict my remarks here to two other Greek inscriptions, belonging to a man whose father's name was Aristonax (early third century BCE) and to Sophytos son of Naratos (second century BCE). The changing political status of Alexandria in Arachosia throughout this

period, from Persian control to conquest by Alexander, to province of the Mauryan empire, to Greco-Bactrian control, should be borne in mind.

The short, badly damaged dedication by the son of Aristonax states that it has been set up 'in this sanctuary (*temenos*)', in thanks for his salvation, but the rest of the preserved text permits widely varying reconstructions (Fraser 1979; Rougemont 2012: no. 81). It may contain a reference to the city's eponymous (re)founder, Alexander: only the portion 'Alex-', however, is preserved. The dedicator's salvation may have been from a wild animal attack (*theros*).

The autobiographical epitaph of Sophytos son of Naratos was acquired on the antiquities market, but its provenance is considered to be Old Kandahar (Bernard, Pinault, and Rougemont 2004; Rougemont 2012: no. 84). Its author (whose name is not Greek, but may be Indian) describes his education, career, and restoration of his family's wealth and honour in elegant Greek verse, peppered with allusions to the Fates and his cultivation of 'the virtue of the Archer (Apollo) and the Muses' (Mairs 2012). His name and patronymic are spelled out in an acrostich. Whether or not the content of the inscription can tell us anything about the religious practices of Sophytos and his community, we can see that the names of Greek gods and supernatural entities, and knowledge of the matters of which they served as patrons, were in currency in second-century Kandahar, even among those who did not have Greek names (I deliberately leave the question of Sophytos' ethnic identity—as opposed to name or descent—open).

It is in the Indo-Greek states that we find the most decisive evidence (textual and artistic) for Greek adoption of local religions. Although Greek divinities continue to be depicted on coins, as I shall discuss in 'Religious Iconography on Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek Coins', below, Indian gods, iconography, and languages also appear. The city of Taxila (near modern Islamabad), like Ai Khanoum, had temples whose architecture and religion owed more to local ways than to Greek. Outside the Indo-Greek domains, at the city of Vidisha (modern Besnagar, Madhya Pradesh) we find a Taxilan Greek patronizing a local Indian cult centre.

The Indo-Greek period settlement at Taxila—Sirkap—was one of several cities founded in the vicinity at different periods. Although the city of Sirkap was founded in the period of the Greco-Bactrian expansion into India, in the early to mid-second century BCE, its excavated strata are, for

the most part, much later, dating to the period after the fall of the Indo-Greek kingdoms (on the excavation of Taxila, see Marshall 1960). Caution should therefore be exercised in interpreting the remains of the city's religious institutions and deciding whether they had the same form under the Indo-Greeks.

Apollonios of Tyana visited Taxila in the first century CE, and a brief account of the city is given in Philostratos' *Life*, which includes a description of a large, columned stone temple containing a small shrine (2.20). There are two candidates for the identification of this temple: Jandial C, some distance to the north of the walls of Sirkap, and Mohra Maliaran, to the west of the city (Rapin 1995). Although Philostratos claims that the temple contained wall scenes depicting Alexander the Great and Porus, he does not name a cult object. Both temples are more overtly Classical in style than any of the Ai Khanoum temples, with columns and peristyles (Mohra Maliaran) or windowed circumambulatory corridors (Jandial C), but little or nothing remains of their religious equipment. The question of whether they were dedicated to a Greek, Iranian, or Indian deity, and the form of worship, therefore remains essentially open.

Within the city of Sirkap itself we find further religious institutions. Here, the connection to Indian religions is clearer. There are two Buddhist stupas (mound-like structures containing relics), one of which, the 'Double-Headed Eagle Stupa', bears pilasters in Greek style with Corinthian columns. The city's largest cult site was the 'Apsidal Temple', but this was destroyed by an earthquake in around 30 CE, and a Buddhist shrine rebuilt in its courtyard. Whether or not the temple was originally Buddhist in denomination, it was therefore appropriated by what had become the dominant religion of the region.

A Taxilan Greek named Heliodoros, who served as ambassador from the Indo-Greek king Antialkidas (reigned *c*.115–95 BCE), left an inscription, in Prākrit, on a pillar at Besnagar, the capital of a local Indian king named Bhagabhadra, in which he described himself as a devotee of the god Vāsudeva, a patronymic indicating Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu (trans. Salomon 1998: 265–7; see further Mairs forthcoming). Many questions arise from this inscription: does Heliodoros dedicate out of personal piety, or because erecting a pillar outside the temple at Besnagar was the 'done thing' for an ambassador seeking to make a positive impression on the

local ruler? If a devotee of Vishnu, had he begun to worship the god during his posting at Besnagar, or in his home city of Taxila? Would Heliodoros have understood the 'Vishnu' of his inscription at Besnagar as another god —perhaps a Greek-named god—in another city or context? As I have already suggested, the superficially ethnocentric names of gods, temples, and cults that we find in our sources from the Hellenistic Far East may, in fact, permit multiple readings, in both contemporary discourse and modern analysis.

RELIGION AND POLITICS

Buddhism

I have already discussed two Greek inscriptions from the site of Old Kandahar, ancient Alexandria in Arachosia, which tell us something of the religious life and cultural milieu of the Greek-literate community there. A further group of inscriptions reflect an attempt at proselytization. The Indian emperor Chandragupta Maurya had received Arachosia in 303 BCE. In the 260s BCE, his grandson, Aśoka, embraced Buddhism, and set up a series of edicts, on pillars and rock faces throughout his empire, proclaiming his own conversion and promoting the Buddhist *dhamma* ('Law'). Several such inscriptions have been found at Kandahar, and instead of being in Prākrit, they are in Greek and Aramaic. A comparatively lengthy Greek inscription (although not all of it is preserved) represents a translation of Aśoka's Twelfth and Thirteenth Major Rock Edicts (Rougemont 2012: no. 83). A shorter, bilingual Greek–Aramaic inscription is a freer translation of the format and sentiments of other edicts (Rougemont 2012: no. 82). As well as recording his desire that the peoples of his empire should adopt pious virtues such as vegetarianism and respect for their elders, Aśoka also indicates that he has tried to spread the *dhamma* beyond his borders. The Kandahar translation does not preserve the full text of the Thirteenth Major Rock Edict, but more complete texts elsewhere contain the following passage:

> Now it is conquest by Dhamma that Beloved-of-the-Gods considers to be the best conquest. And it (conquest by Dhamma) has been won here, on the borders, even six hundred yojanas away, where the Greek king Antiochos rules, beyond there where the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander rule, likewise in the south among the Cholas, the Pandyas, and as far as Tamraparni. Here in the king's domain among the Greeks, the Kambojas, the Nabhakas, the Nabhapamkits, the Bhojas, the Pitinikas, the Andhras, and the Palidas, everywhere people are following Beloved-of-the-Gods' instructions in Dhamma. Even where Beloved-of-the-Gods' envoys have not been, these people too, having heard of the practice of Dhamma and the ordinances and instructions in Dhamma given by Beloved-of-the-Gods, are following it and will continue to do so. This conquest has been won everywhere, and it gives great joy—the joy which only conquest by Dhamma can give. But even this joy is of little consequence. Beloved-of-the-Gods considers the great fruit to be experienced in the next world to be more important. (Dhammika 1993, 26–8.)

The Thirteenth Major Rock Edict indicates Asoka's desire and efforts to proselytize Greeks both inside and outside his empire, but we know little about the reception of these attempts at conversion—certainly not among the Hellenistic monarchs to the west whose names he knew and with whom he was most probably in some form of diplomatic contact. Evidence exists, however, to document the success of Buddhism in later periods, among later Indo-Greek monarchs and their people. I have already noted the presence of Buddhist stupas at Taxila, in a region which was later a great centre of Buddhism (Brancaccio and Behrendt 2006; Bactria, too, was an important centre of Buddhism in periods long after the fall of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom: see e.g. Litvinskij and Zejmal' 2004). As I shall go on to discuss in 'Religious Iconography on Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek Coins', below, Buddhist imagery appears on the coins of some Indo-Greek kings. But one particular Indo-Greek king, Menander (reigned *c*.155–130 BCE in northern India), not only appears to have adopted Buddhism himself, but, as 'King Milinda', enjoyed a legendary status in Indian tradition as a convert to and patron of the religion.

Menander is one of the very few Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kings to be mentioned in Classical sources, which, however, celebrate his military prowess more than his religious leanings. Strabo (11.11.1) records that he advanced far into northern India, and was one of a series of local Greek kings who, between them, conquered more territory in India than Alexander the Great. The Periplus of the Erythaean Sea (47) states that coins of Menander are still to be found in the present day (first century CE) in the north-western Indian port of Barygaza. During Menander's reign, Buddhism certainly flourished in north-western India: a Buddhist

reliquary from Bajaur, in Gandhara, bears a regnal year of Menander (Majumdar 1937). But the most remarkable account of Menander and his reign is a much later Pali Buddhist text, the *Milindapanha*, or *Questions of King Milinda* (Rhys-Davids 1890; on Menander, see also Bopearachchi 1990a, 1990b; Fussman 1993). In this dialogue, Menander, who is described as a Greek king, is depicted in debate with a Buddhist sage, Nagasena, and is eventually won over to Buddhism. The account is, on the whole, given its priorities, light on historical detail. What it does indicate is that, according to later tradition at any rate, Menander was favourable towards Buddhism and most likely an adherent himself.

Religious Iconography on Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek Coins

Like their colleagues in the other Hellenistic monarchies, some, at least, of the Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kings received divine honours. (Antimachos I was deified during his reign, as attested in the dating formula of a Greek tax receipt from Bactria: Clarysse and Thompson 2007; on royal cult in Bactria, see further Martinez-Sève 2010: 13–18.) They also acted as patrons of religious cults: both the temple with indented niches at Ai Khanoum and the Temple of the Oxus contained clay sculptures with diadems. The coinage of the Greco-Bactrian kings displays a range of Greek deities (see, concisely, the discussion of Martinez-Sève 2010: 2–6; a browse through the catalogues Bopearachchi 1991, 1993, or 1998 will give an idea of the range of deities depicted on both Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins). Zeus was favoured by the Diodotids on their silver coinage (the eponymous ‘thundering Zeus’ of Holt 1999), with the pairs of Hermes and Athena, and Zeus and Artemis on the bronze coinage of Diodotos II. Euthydemos introduced a type of Herakles, used also by his son Demetrios I, and Eukratides employed the Dioskouroi. As I have already noted, the creators of paintings and statues in later temples (such as the ‘Temple of the Dioskouroi’ at Diberjin) could have drawn inspiration from such images on coins. As Martinez-Sève notes, all such depictions of apparently ‘Greek’ gods could have carried a double meaning, intentional or unintentional. Artemis, for example, could have

been understood as the Near Eastern goddesses Anahita or Nana, or a local Bactrian equivalent (Martinez-Sève 2010: 5–7).

Following the conquests of the early second century BCE, Indo-Greek kings such as Agathokles and Pantaleon also began to strike hybrid Indo-Greek coins with bilingual legends, and to adopt Indian religious imagery in addition to Greek. Agathokles introduced images of the gods Samkarshana and Vāsudeva-Krishna—the Taxilan Greek Heliodoros' later dedication to Vāsudeva at Besnagar should be recalled. Heliodoros' own king, Antialkidas, stuck more closely to the Greek iconographic tradition, even on bilingual coins. He employed types of a throned Zeus, Zeus with an elephant, caps of the Dioskouroi with palms, and an elephant alone. The famed 'Buddhist convert' Menander favoured a greater variety of symbols. He issued types of Athena and Nike, Herakles, an elephant, a bull's head, a camel, a tripod, a palm, and a boar's head, but the type which has attracted the greatest attention is that bearing the image of a wheel, identified with the Buddhist 'Wheel of Law'. The political context of all of these choices of image, language, and design must be borne in mind: as well as being prompted by the personal piety of these individuals, where relevant, their use of images to appeal to particular communities and constituencies was carefully managed.

Greek Gods in the Kushan Empire

The numismatic and epigraphic record from the Kushan empire, which rose to dominance in the former Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek domains in the early first century CE, provides indirect evidence that the earlier 'Greek' gods of the region in fact had multiple identities. The 'Greek gods' of the Hellenistic Far East were (or became) something more complex than that. The coins of Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kings, as I have discussed, bear many divine images with familiar Classical iconography. Even the most quintessentially Greek of these 'images from a foreign pantheon' may well have been susceptible to alternate readings by the local peoples of Central Asia and India (Boyce and Grenet 1991: 161). Images of Helios, for example, with his 'sunburst' crown, and driving a chariot, appear on the coins of the Greco-Bactrian king Plato (for examples, see Bopearachchi 1991: pl. 24; Boyce and Grenet 1991: 162–3,

already see an evolution in the imagery of Helios on these coins towards that more typical of the Indian god Surya, or Iranian Mithra). Helios is also depicted, in bust form, on cult objects from both Ai Khanoum and Takht-i Sangin (noted by Shenkar 2012: 140; the objects in question are a plaque depicting Kybele from the Temple with Indented Niches at Ai Khanoum: Francfort 1984: 93–104; and a silver plaque from the Temple of the Oxus: Litvinskii 2010). On other coins of Plato, Helios is depicted standing and holding a sceptre, again with his distinctive sun rays.

This image survives onto the coinage of the Kushan emperor Kanishka in the early second century CE, where it undergoes a reinterpretation. Kanishka implemented a policy of replacing Greek legends on his coins with text in the Bactrian language, and at the same time of 'translating' captions which identified gods by their Greek names into the names of local Iranian gods (Cribb 2007: 366–7). The god recognizable from Plato's coins, and captioned on Kanishka's early issues, as 'Helios', becomes 'Mithra' without any further change in iconography. This 'translation' of Greek into Iranian gods was only the culmination of a long process of syncretism, which had begun under Greco-Bactrian rule. Multiple such assimilations might be possible for any individual 'Greek' god: in addition to Helios, in his solar aspect, Mithra might also be equated with Zeus (Martinez-Sève 2010: 8–9).

CONCLUSIONS

As well as the cults of Greek gods, other religions flourished in the Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kingdoms. In Bactria, the river Oxus was worshipped, and the archaeological evidence is also suggestive of the existence of other local and Near Eastern cults, both within the precincts of shrines such as the Ai Khanoum temples and the Temple of the Oxus, and in independent locations. In India, we find evidence of the importance of Buddhism and the cults of Indian gods both to the region's inhabitants, Greek and non-Greek, and in political display.

There was considerable flexibility in iconography and religious practice in the Hellenistic Far East: sites might serve as foci of multiple religious

rites, perhaps with different ethnic ‘slants’, and be patronized by more than one ethnic group, or by individuals with a more complex personal ethnic identity. The use of multiple names for the same temple or divine image need not necessarily have operated at the level of officially orchestrated or approved syncretism. But if this did occur, as I suspect it did, it may have allowed diverse ethnic communities to use the same site without the necessity of ‘appropriating’ the deity and its worship for any particular ethnic affiliation. This is not to impute any degree of ‘split personality’ to the identity and iconography of the divinity. Greeks may have looked at the ‘Dioskouroi’ at Dil’berdzhin and seen one thing, and local Bactrians may have looked at them and seen another (how would a Greek and a Bactrian have referred to them in conversation with one another?). On the other hand, it is possible that people who looked at such an image did so with a conscious awareness that it was more all-encompassing, something that could have the attributes of one god without denying its identity as the other.

Suggested Reading

The classic accounts of the history of the Greek kingdoms of Bactria and India are Tarn 1951 [1938] and Narain 1957, but both are now essentially only of historiographical interest. For references to the archaeological literature on the sites discussed in this chapter, see Mairs 2011, regularly updated at <www.bactria.org>. The collections of articles edited by Bernard and Grenet 1991 and Grenet 1987b contain debates, *inter alia*, on the identification of cult statues and of practices associated with Zoroastrianism. On Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek numismatics, good starting points are Holt 1999 and the catalogue Bopearachchi 1991.

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CHAPTER 43

CHINA AND GREECE: COMPARISONS AND INSIGHTS

LISA RAPHALS

INTRODUCTION

THIS brief account of Chinese and Greek religion focuses on three topics that are not only of significant interest to both subjects, but also lend themselves to comparison: cosmogony, cosmology, and gods and humans and mantic practices (divination). I begin with several points of methodology and the problem of how to structure a comparison, and then discuss why a comparison between Chinese and Greek religion is rewarding.

Any comparison must take into account substantial differences in both sources and theoretical accounts. Chinese sources vastly outnumber the Greek. This situation offers the opportunity of using the Chinese evidence to address some lacunae in the Greek record. The range of Chinese evidence offers a view of important changes and debates within as well as between cultural traditions. Attention to internal changes and debates is important in order to avoid overgeneralization.

Several differences between the Chinese and Greek evidence are noteworthy. The Chinese evidence offers the advantage of historical continuity, which has little or no Greek counterpart. For example, despite the political upheavals of twentieth-century China, mantic activities remain widely practised in greater China. By mantic activities I mean divination, fortune-telling, the use of the *Yi jing* 易經 (Classic of Change). The Chinese evidence thus offers the prospect of both historical and ethnographic materials within one tradition. In both these areas, present research has only begun to sketch the possibilities. The Chinese evidence thus offers multiple opportunities to defamiliarize or 'parochialize' well-known Greek perspectives.

Several methodological perspectives are important. The first is the need to focus on both intellectual and social institutions. This point was articulated in a landmark volume in which Jean-Pierre Vernant (1974) addressed the rationality and coherence of divination and its significance in the formation of social institutions. Recognition of the importance of the social role of divination in turn prompted other questions, for example, the authority of divination within a society and the place of mantic specialists in social hierarchies. Vernant also emphasized the normalcy of both aspects of divination in civilizations where it was central.

A second methodological point is the importance of anthropology and the use of 'comparables' across cultures (in the sense of Detienne 2000 and 2001). To posit comparables, we must consider historically specific and concrete comparanda within each culture within its indigenous historical context. Only then can we look between contexts. For social practices, we must compare concrete particulars embedded in their social contexts and institutions. For ideas, we must draw on histories of change and debate within each context. Cultural comparison, undertaken in concrete situations and on questions subjected to debate in each particular context, can bring new and unexpected insights to help us better understand concepts and practices that, because of their universality, can easily lead us to partial and reducing generalizations.

Yet not all aspects of Chinese and Greek religion are equally comparable. One problem is how we understand and compare genres. In areas like medicine or historiography, textual genres and interpretive problems are readily comparable, but in others they are not, for example,

in the very different Chinese and Greek histories of astronomy, astrology, and mythology.

A third point is the issue of diversity and contestation within ancient Greek and early Chinese religions. Neither can be taken as a timeless, essential whole. But once we historicize either, the ground begins to change under our feet, and comfortable terms cease to hold purchase.

The theoretical histories of Chinese and Greek religion have very different strengths. The long history of engagement between Greco-Roman classics and anthropology, and especially the contributions of Moses Finley (1953, 1954, 1973), Jean-Pierre Vernant, Marcel Detienne (2000, 2001), and others to establish comparative methods in these disciplines have created theoretical perspectives that have no Chinese equivalent.

An engagement between Hellenist and Sinological methods allows us to reconsider ultimately Greek categories and taxonomies that have dominated the comparative study of religion, especially divination (Lloyd 1996). For example, the distinction between inspired and technical divination is a legacy of Plato and Cicero that simply does not fit the Chinese mantic picture (Raphals 2013).

COSMOGONY AND COSMOLOGY

Chinese systematic thought about cosmology may date to as early as the ninth century BCE, and gives rise to several fundamentally important concepts. First is the idea of a universe characterized by interactions of time and space (*yu zhou* 宇宙), especially the correlation of areas of the world to the seasons of the year and periods of time such as the sexagenary cycle (*ganzhi* 干支, the combinations of Ten Heaven Stems and Twelve Earth Branches). This cosmos is ultimately composed of *q*i 氣 (the energy that constitutes and organizes matter and causes growth and change) in processes of constant change, based on the interactions of *yin* and *yang* 陰陽 and the Five Agents (*wuxing* 五行), and interactions between heaven, earth, and humanity. Chinese cosmologies thus depict a universe that is interdependent and sometimes described as ‘organic’ (Needham 1956; cf. Hall and Ames 1998), and characterized by the ongoing transformation of

yin and *yang* (Graham 1986; Raphals 1998). Notions of cosmic unity also underline cleromantic techniques such as *Yi* divination (prognostication by means of the *Yi jing* or its predecessor, the *Zhou yi* 宇宙 (Zhou 'Changes'), in which the random manipulation of milfoil (yarrow) stalks revealed the underlying patterns of *yin* and *yang* manifest at the time and place of the procedure.

A cosmology based on cyclic transformations has several important implications. One is a relative disinterest in cosmogony. While there are Chinese legends of the creation of the universe, cosmogony is less important than transformation and the view that the universe is in a constant process of mutual transformation of the *yin* and *yang qi* of which it is composed. A second is the notion of good and ill auspice (*ji xiong* 吉凶): that is, that certain times were propitious or inauspicious for certain activities. This idea was also central to Chinese mantic and ritual practice (discussed in 'Mantic Practices'), and informed a large number of mantic techniques. Third, was the belief that sages could perceive pervasive connections and systematic correspondences between aspects of a cosmos in constant change.

A cosmology based on transformation contrasts completely with the attempts of the ancient Greek Presocratic philosophers to identify stable ultimate constituents of matter, since *yin–yang* and *wuxing* are 'phases', rather than elements. It also introduces a striking alternative to the Greek idea that human–divine interaction is the best or only way to understand the cosmos and the human place in it. Nonetheless, the Chinese attempt to understand the world as a constant transformation of *yin* and *yang* is also entirely commensurable with belief in the gods and spirits of its traditional religion.

Given these differences, it is striking that macrocosm–microcosm analogies appear in both Chinese and Greek sources, but their significance is very different. In Chinese accounts, parallels between terrestrial and cosmic events and phenomena seem to have arisen precisely because they were considered to be interconnected, and events at one level were understood to produce effects at the other. Astronomical anomalies such as eclipses and comets were of particular interest, because they signified disruption in the heavens corresponding to disruptions in the human world, usually understood to be misrule by the reigning dynasty. By contrast,

Greek astronomy and cosmology did not focus on anomalies in this way (Lloyd and Sivin 2002: 214–15).

Greek accounts present very different relations between the human microcosm and the cosmic macrocosm. The components for a macrocosm–microcosm theory—distinct from an explicit articulation of such a theory—have been attributed to early Greek thinkers, including Heraklitos, Demokritos, the Pythagoreans, Empedokles, and the authors of the Hippokratic Corpus (Conger 1922: 2–7). The one extant clear Greek articulation of a macrocosm–microcosm analogy recognizes some kind of similar structure or process in the cosmos and in humanity. The fragment is ascribed to Anaximenes by Aetius: 'Just as our soul which is air holds us together, so it is breath and air that encompasses the whole world' (Diehls–Kranz 1903: 13 B 2; trans. Conger 1922: 2; cf. Allers 1944: 321–37; Lloyd 1966: 235–6).

Plato also uses, but does not articulate, microcosmic theories, primarily analogies between structure, functions or health of the body or soul, and the state (*Resp*. 434–5, 441, 580d–e); and between the created visible universe and its original (*Ti*. 30c, 35a, 36d–e, 39e, 40a–b). Aristotle describes the relation between the *macros cosmos* and *micros cosmos* as one of opposition (*Ph*. 252b26). But none of these theories are interactive in the sense that Chinese cosmologies are: Greek microcosmic theories focus on technology, especially the complex interrelations between cosmological and biological theories. Finally, Greek theories reflect an anthropomorphic religion and an anthropocentric cosmos (Lloyd 1966: 194–9, 295–9) that has little or no Chinese counterpart.

GODS AND HUMANS

Vernant argued that the ancient Greeks defined the human condition within a triad of animals, humans, and gods (1980; cf. Detienne 1977 [1972]; Detienne and Vernant 1989 [1979]; Lloyd 2011). Vernant's study is part of an ongoing engagement between classics, anthropology, and structuralism, and he rejects three interdependent assumptions: (1) that every mythical figure is an independent entity with its own essence; (2) that this essence

corresponds to some reality in the natural world; and (3) that the relation between myth and reality is symbolic in nature. Instead, Vernant argues that every god is defined by a network of relations of affinity and opposition to other gods within the pantheon (1980: 145). One function of polis religion and sacrifice in particular was to maintain the boundary between humans and gods: the use of animal victims ritually maintained the distinction between humans and animals (Detienne 1977 [1972]). While many Chinese legends and literary motifs also feature interdependent relations between humans, animals, and gods, it is difficult to compare mythological systems because myth itself is a vexed category in Chinese thought and religion (Girardot 1976; Duara 1988). What can be compared are debates of various kinds about the boundary between humans, animals, and gods, and the possibility that humans can practise some form of self-divinization and become like gods.

A different context of triadic relations between humans, animals, and gods is comparable. Several Greek and Chinese philosophical texts created scales of nature that located humans within an evolutionary scale of animate beings. For example, the philosopher Xunzi (*c*.312–230 BCE) describes a progression of living things based on ascending faculties. According to Xunzi, water and fire have *qi* but no capacity for procreation. Grass and trees procreate but lack awareness. Birds and beasts have awareness but no capacity for moral judgement (*yi* 義). Humans have *qi*, procreation, awareness, and also the capacity to behave correctly; therefore, they are the highest form of life (*Xunzi* 9: 164).

Aristotle (*De an*. 414b1–29b1) provides an interesting contrast in his account of the faculties of the soul: nutrition and reproduction (*threptikon*); sensation (*aisthetikon*), desire (*oretikon*), locomotion *(kineton kata topon*); imagination (*phantasia*); and reason (*nous, to dianoetikon*). Again, the higher the being, the more numerous and more nuanced its faculties. Almost all living things nourish themselves and reproduce; all animals share sensation, desire, and locomotion. Some animals have imagination and limited reason, but only humans possess imagination and reason. Aristotle (*Metaph*. 1.1, 980b1–981a3) grants animals intelligence (*phronesis*), but qualifies this by differentiating animal from human *phronesis* (*Eth. Nic*. 1141a22–8). Elsewhere he denies animals reason, thought, and intellect (*De an*. 404b4–6; 414b18–19; 428a19–24; cf. Sorabji 1995: 12–16). Finally, Aristotle privileges reason,

and places humans between animals and gods (*Eth. Nic*. 1177b25–32); and states that a man without a polis is either bad or above all humans (*Pol*. 1252a1).

Both Xunzi and Aristotle thus portray animals and humans on evolutionary scales, but of very different kinds. Xunzi's scale ends with human morality, with no reference to divine powers. Aristotle considers contemplation (*theoria*) akin to the activity of the gods (while other virtues are purely human (*Pol*. 1178a8–10)). Both passages are interesting for what they do not say. Many Chinese gods were people who excelled in virtue or who became revered ancestors. Recent Sinological scholarship has turned attention towards a fourth-century self-cultivation literature, often associated with the sixteenth chapter of the *Guanzi* (*Nei ye* 内業, 16:1a–6b; trans. Rickett 1998: 39–55). This literature described the use of self-cultivation through *qi* to gain power over things in the world. Thus, according to some claims from this period, the human–divine boundary is also permeable insofar as humans could attain divine powers through self-cultivation techniques. Michael Puett argues that the term *shen* 神 ('spirit') has two distinct referents. It refers to spirits who reside in the extra-human world and hold power over natural phenomena; but it also refers to refined forms of *qi* within the human body (2002: 21–2). Either way, the boundary between the human and the divine is permeable.

By contrast, the Greek boundary between mortals and immortals is absolute and defined by mortality. Gods lived forever and could know the future. For example, Julia Kindt (2003) has argued that 'Delphic oracle stories' are an important part of a Greek reflective discourse on the world and the place of humans within it. Differing attitudes towards the nature of divinity also may have contributed to very different attitudes towards the boundary between what was considered 'natural and supernatural'. The relative harmony between the human and divine realms in much (though not all) Chinese religious thought contrasts with Greek accounts of tension between humans and gods, in which the human and divine are incommensurable categories.

Both Chinese and Greek metaphysics assumed the existence of gods or divine powers and the possibility of communicating with them (with important implications for the mantic arts). Within both traditions there is disagreement over whether divine powers had a benign interest in human affairs. In both traditions there are examples of economies of human–

divine relations based on prayer and sacrifice. Greek bird and weather divination and Chinese oracle bone divination offered ways for diviners to effectively negotiate with the gods by means of repeated questions, as, for example, at Dodona (Eidinow 2013 [2007]). Both traditions also include ethical frameworks for divination, based on presumed correlations between cosmic and human orders. Both Chinese and Greek philosophers emphasized the ethical role of divination as part of the divine concepts of justice and retribution.

But Greek and Chinese understandings of the nature of these interactions were very different, and there was a long history of debate within each tradition. Chinese models of divine–human relations were genetic (gods as royal ancestors) or bureaucratic (gods as a hierarchy of rulers and officials). Some Chinese mantic techniques addressed particular gods responsible for specific time periods and modes of activity, but they progressively de-emphasize direct communication or negotiation with divine powers.

Greek assumptions about the benevolence and interest of the gods in humanity are equivocal. Bird and weather diviners associated a wide range of phenomena with communications from particular gods and predictions of particular kinds, and omens were understood to systematically reflect divine intentions. These practices persisted into Hellenistic Greece, but the legacy of Plato and Cicero privileged oracular divination. The gods of Greek myth were notoriously fickle; the arbitrariness of human fates and the indifference of the gods are recurring themes. Hellenistic philosophers shifted to the idea that the future was somehow predetermined and thence predictable, but this shift corresponded with cults of and ideas about *tuche* (Bobzien 1998; Hankinson 1998; Eidinow 2011). One result was a systematic and abstract reflection on problems of cause, necessity, and the logical preconditions that made divination possible and legitimate.

Starting in the late Warring States period, competing schemata began to link *yin* and *yang* (variously described) to phenomena in space (the directions), time (the calendar), notions of good and ill auspice, and the body. The eventual hermeneutics of Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) correlative cosmology focused on elaborate microcosm–macrocosm correspondences between the three realms of heaven, earth, and humanity, and used numbers to express these symbolic correlations. Chinese correlative cosmology also provided ‘natural’ explanations for the

establishment and expansion of the Han dynasty, while scholar officials used correlative cosmology and discourses on omens to define (and circumscribe) royal power through admonition.

This contrast between Chinese and Greek attitudes towards the gods and divinity also informs a defining issue in twentieth-century discussions of Chinese thought; namely, the cultural uniqueness of Chinese cosmology or its commensurability with 'Western' cosmologies. On one side of the debate, Weber (1951) argued that the Chinese were limited by the lack of a notion of transcendence or tension between the human and divine realms. On the other, Marcel Granet (1980 [1934]) argued for the distinctiveness of Chinese cosmology because of the lack of demarcation of human and divine realms, including a notion of transcendence. Granet's work informed a wide range of subsequent studies, especially the work of Joseph Needham (Needham (with Wang) 1956), K. C. Chang (1986), A. C. Graham (1986, 1991), David Hall and Roger Ames (1995), and Michael Puett (2002). These all argue that radically different cosmologies distinguish China and the West.

MANTIC PRACTICES

The early history of Chinese mantic practice presents important contrasts to Greek modes of divination (see further, in this volume, Flower, Chapter 20, and Iles Johnston, Chapter 32), and also to comparative studies of Greek and African divination. Vernant's key insight—the need to study divination through the dual aspects of intellectual and social operations—arose specifically through the comparative study of African divination. Yet the impetus for the comparison arose entirely from the study of Greek religion, especially the Delphic oracle; and the comparison privileged issues central to Greek religion. A second problem was that the Greek–African comparison did not use comparable contexts because comparisons of Apolline divination at Delphi and various forms of African divination juxtaposed official or 'state' and private queries.

Social and Institutional Comparables

We can identify five comparable social and institutional contexts of Chinese and Greek mantic practices (Raphals 2013, which informs this entire section). The first is a contrast between official and independent practitioners, although it must be emphasized that Greek and Chinese official and independent mantic specialists practised under very different conditions. The Greek distinction was between oracles and the independent, self-employed, and sometimes itinerant *manteis*. There is a corresponding Chinese distinction between court ritualists (who determined auspicious days and prognosticated on other official matters) and independent marketplace fortune-tellers and fate calculation experts (*suan ming xiansheng* 算命先生). In both contexts, we know less about the independent practitioners, since few records of such consultations survived. Both Greek and Chinese independent practitioners seem to have enjoyed lower status than their official counterparts. Within a Greek context, a possible explanation is that their procedures were perceived as less objective and more subject to manipulation. Here, a Chinese perspective parochializes the Greek evidence because many independent Chinese mantic specialists used the same methods as their official counterparts: turtle and milfoil, diviner's boards, and hemerology (*Shi ji* 127; Loewe 1994).

A second comparable is the importance of mantic lineages, albeit for different reasons. Greek *manteis* derived competitive advantage from claims of descent from a mantic family, and some oracles were managed by priestly clans. With no institutional procedures for selecting and training mantic specialists, lineage claims provided some assurance of competence, as well as a context for instruction and the transmission of texts. In some Chinese cases family transmission included daughters as well as sons (*Hou Han shu* 82B: 2717).

A third comparable is competition between mantic expertise and other kinds of technical, textual, or ritual mastery. The relative independence of mantic experts and the absence of central political power in both Warring States China (450–221 BCE) and fifth- and early fourth-century Greece led to intense intellectual and political competition between intellectual specialists. The extent of state control of mantic activity in early China is a matter of debate, and no such control existed in Archaic Greece. In

Warring States China, social and geographic mobility probably helped diffuse mantic activity from the courts of kings. Mantic experts competed for employment by local courts and wealthy families. Nonetheless, the official character of divination persisted through its links to state ritual; mantic practices performed in local courts or families drew their authority from connection to state ritual.

A striking result of this competition in the Chinese case is the pervasive *absence* of mantic texts from the received textual tradition. (Many titles survive in the technical sections of the bibliographic treatise of the *Standard History of the Han* (*Han shu* 30), but only the *Yi jing* has survived in the received tradition (Raphals 2008–2009.) By contrast, mantic texts are widespread among texts excavated from tombs.

Greek mantic activity was competitive at several levels. Independent *manteis* needed quick wits, flexibility, and a great deal of personal charisma, possibly a result of a 'cultural translation' of Mesopotamian mantic practices to Greece (Flower 2008). In China, by contrast, the two types of practitioner coexisted, interacted, and often used the same methods. There was also a polarization between the status and activities of male and female Greek diviners that has no equivalent in China. Female *manteis* were of lower status than their male counterparts for several reasons. Priestesses worked under the management of the male priestly lineages, and female independent *manteis* lacked access to the key roles of military advisor and ritualist. (For further details, see Flower 2008 and Raphals 2013.)

A fourth comparable is the dynamics of mantic consultation: both question topics and the dynamics of interaction between consultor and practitioner. Initially, Chinese and Greek question topics seem strikingly similar. States sought mantic advice on warfare, alliances, rainfall and harvests, disasters, choice of personnel, major plans and policies, and on ritual, sacrifice, and other matters of state religious cult. Private consultors asked about domestic matters—especially marriage, children, prosperity, and illness—and about intended actions, including travel, changes of residence, and decisions about livelihood or financial decisions. Importantly, most questions are not predictive; they ask what will be advantageous, pleasing to the gods, or auspicious. Such questions do not invite factual and direct verification.

But there are important differences. Chinese questions and methods attempt to map good and ill auspices onto chronological cycles. The result is a model of the operation of good auspice that is not immediately dependent on divine goodwill. The focus of risk and doubt becomes temporal, and questions of this kind ask not what to do but when to do it.

Both Chinese and Greek materials indicate the psychological interactions between client and practitioner, and the possibility of negotiation when the results are undesirable. Contemporary fieldwork shows Chinese temple diviners and itinerant practitioners finding ways to mitigate truly disastrous results without undermining their own authority. Xenophon's (*An*. 7.8.3–6) account of his meeting with the *mantis* Eukleides also attests to the importance of a skilled *mantis* knowing his client. Accounts of both Chinese temple diviners and Greek independent *manteis* stress their combination of astute observation and self-confidence. We see these skills equally clearly in the hostile accounts of 'reformed' fortune-tellers from the People's Republic of China revealing the tricks of their trade. In this, they differ from 'official' practitioners, whose choice of method was at least partially determined by their office. By contrast, a choice of methods is good for business.

The consultors we know least about are women and slaves, who frequently appear as topics in questions posed by men, but rarely speak in their own voices. There is evidence that women and slaves consulted oracles of Zeus at Dodona and Asklepios at Epidauros; and flight and manumission may be topics of consultation at Dodona (Eidinow 2012, 2013 [2007]: 102–5; Lhôte 2006: nos 60–4). Chinese evidence shows women using mantic expertise, especially in physiognomy. This expertise would have become increasingly invisible with the institutionalization of mantic practices in the Western Han.

A fifth comparable is the ways in which mantic consultation reflects perceptions of risk; consultation by individuals tells us something about the personal concerns and perceived dangers of ordinary people (Eidinow 2013 [2007]: 3–5). Here, the archaeological and textual records offer fewer opportunities. Because of the very different institutions and methods of mantic consultation, it is very difficult to find comparable Greek and Chinese sources. The Shuihudi daybooks (Poo 1998) and Dodona lead tablets (Parke 1967; Eidinow 2013 [2007]) both present explicit categories

of mantic query, and, juxtaposed, give us a comparative window on the perception of risk in everyday life.

We also find perceptions of risk in the questions posed by official consultors, especially on the subject of warfare. Both Hellenistic Greek and late Warring States Chinese warfare were transformed by the emergence of large armies and new technologies, yet criticisms of military divination underscore that it was still performed. Astronomy and astrology were a very different case. Astronomy became politically charged, especially during the Eastern Han (Eberhard 1957) and the Roman Empire (Barton 1994), because of the potential of omens and anomalies to affirm or question the legitimacy and future of the ruling house. (Physiognomy also had ideological and rhetorical uses, but it did not become an object of the same kind of imperial patronage or debate.) Official interest and patronage also coexisted with the expanding use of personal or private divination. This situation provided both advantages and disadvantages for diviners and their consultors.

Intellectual Comparables

Divination also left its mark on a wide range of Chinese and Greek intellectual domains (Vernant 1974; Chemla, Harper, and Kalinowski 1999). I focus on two comparables. First, both Chinese and Greek metaphysical assumptions led to beliefs in semiosis and hermeneutics: that mantic signs manifested hidden patterns, and could be read and interpreted by those with the correct expertise (Manetti 1993; Struck 2004). But these beliefs (and debates about them) resulted from different assumptions, led in different directions, and changed over time. Greek divination was linked to speculation about cosmology and to the development of theories of hermeneutics and semiosis (Struck 2004). In China, the problem of criteria for validating and rejecting interpretations was closely linked to the use of writing (Bagley 2004). Second, these practices affected the growth of systematic thought and abstraction. They led to a perceived need for techniques for validating or rejecting signs and interpretations. The ambiguity that was so central to Greek reflective narratives about divination is virtually absent in China, where theorizing cosmic regularity was a key goal of mantic activity.

The Chinese and Greek mantic arts are also important elements in the development of systematic enquiry (Lloyd 2002). At times, divination was a conservative influence, for example, in the development of Greek philosophy and science. A comparative perspective reveals a different picture: areas in which divination was linked to the observation of regularities in nature, the development of techniques for observation and verification, and to analyses of cause and effect. Finally, mantic expertise produced the systematic expression of abstract concepts in formal systems such as the hexagrams of the *Yi jing*. Even if we no longer use systems such as Stoic mantic hermeneutics (Bobzien 1998; Hankinson 1998), the importance of the ability to articulate such systems cannot be overstated.

The oldest Chinese written records are divination questions inscribed on animal scapulae and turtle shells, the so-called oracle bone inscriptions (*jiaguwen* 甲骨文, Keightley 1978, 1988; Bagley 2004), although there is also significant evidence that the oral aspects of mantic ritual were important (Djamouri 1999). Chinese mantic practitioners developed strongly visual symbolic practices that have no counterpart in Greek divination, including milfoil divination, techniques for observing *qi* (including the vapours of clouds and mists), and physiognomy. Finally, there was no Greek equivalent to Chinese ritual classics, such as the *Li ji* (Record of Rites) and *Zhou li* (Rites of Zhou), which provided the theoretical and practical foundations for ritual practice, including divination. Nor did the Greeks ever connect divination, ritual, writing, and record-keeping in the tight relation that was fundamental to Chinese mantic practices and intellectual development.

This picture contrasts with a Greek preference for spoken divination (Vernant 1974; Thomas 1992); both Greek and African practices were predominantly oral and performative (Peek 1991). But as written literature increasingly replaced traditional Greek modes of oral expression, new political, scientific, and philosophical systems of thought assimilated and partially displaced divination in a new discourse of rationality. Oracles introduced complex sequences of consultation, response, and transmission of an original response to a distant consultor state (Fontenrose 1976; Maurizio 1997).

The oral orientation of early Greek divination did not encourage the development of systematic or symbolic systems for decoding and interpreting omens. By contrast, from an early period Chinese divination

was based on a system of written signs, the hexagrams of the *Yi jing*. Mantic practices based on writing offered a prospect of decoding the text of the universe itself. Thus, Greek divination was culturally conservative in important ways that have no Chinese counterpart. Although traditional Chinese emphasis on ritual has often been described as culturally conservative or counterproductive to progress, the history of divination suggests a very different possibility.

Why were mantic and ritual texts compiled in China but not in Greece? Divination by shells, bones, and milfoil pre-date Chinese mantic texts by hundreds or thousands of years. Michael Loewe (1994) has speculated that stylized ritual procedures displaced the spontaneous actions and reactions of earlier mantic experts, and that even the original motives for mantic procedures may have been lost by the time ritual and texts were written down. Similar questions concern possible reasons for the creation of the omen collections that, over a long and complex history, became the *Yi jing*.

Greek and Chinese divination methods also diverge in relation to naturalistic thinking. Here, the key difference is the perceived involvement of divine powers. Chinese mantic methods and attitudes were compatible with naturalistic enquiry and offered opportunities for it. By contrast, a tension between naturalism and divination closely tied to the gods seems peculiarly Greek. Although Greek naturalistic medicine coexisted with iatromancy, explicit Greek medical notions of nature and cause have no Chinese counterpart. Here again, comparison underscores the danger of broad historical generalization from limited and culturally specific Greek evidence.

An enduring intellectual legacy of the Western Han was the selective canonization and official sponsorship of some texts and marginalization of others. Technical arts, including the mantic arts, were largely excluded from official ideology and institutions. The *Yi jing* continued to enjoy a privileged position as a work of moral knowledge, not as a mantic text. These developments were intellectually conservative, and, overall, constrained the kind of systematic and abstract thought often linked to the development of science and philosophy. Here astrocalendrics are an exception. Both standard histories and excavated texts show the increasing complexity of astronomical observation and theory. By contrast, Greek interest in astronomy, astrology, and calendrics did not take the form of state sponsorship (Lloyd and Sivin 2002).

In summary, Chinese and Greek mantic practices contributed to systematic thought in very different ways. Chinese notions of symmetry, number, and abstract patterns of change were central to the development of systematic medicine, astronomy, and cosmology. Greek debates about divination were central to the development of scepticism, logic, and theories of causation.

CONCLUSION

The Chinese evidence challenges received opinion in Classical scholarship on religion, cosmology, and divination in several ways. It is immediately striking that many Chinese mantic techniques simply do not fit into conventional frameworks of 'inspired and technical' or 'intuitive and inductive' divination (Bouché-Leclercq 1975 [1879–1882]). Greek divination addresses the will of the gods, mediated through natural phenomena and a communication system of signs. Most Chinese methods keep a respectful distance from divine powers, and are abstract, systematic, and significantly based on number and calculation. Most Greek procedures presupposed a direct divine origin for divinatory signs that privileged spontaneous events, especially the movements of birds, thunder and lightning, involuntary motion, and dreams. Given these fundamental differences, it is no surprise that apparently similar techniques were understood very differently. Wind divination, physiognomy, and cleromancy are cases in point.

The origins of oracular divination and the Delphic oracle have vexed Greek scholarship on divination for decades (Fontenrose 1978; Price 1985; Maurizio 1995, 1997), and here the Chinese evidence has a particular contribution to make. Comparative evidence has been used to claim that, in other societies, oracles also provided ways to address social change, attain consensus, and diffuse blame. The Chinese evidence contributes to a trans-cultural understanding of the origins of oracles, their roles in periods of social and political upheaval, and the nature of religious and mantic authority. For example, Greek oracular divination (especially at Delphi) drew authority from its independence from the state. By contrast, Chinese

mantic activity drew its authority from connection with rulership. Comparison also shows that mantic queries provided a wide range of responses, including predictions (which were verifiable), normative advice, and a means for political consensus and authority. The Chinese evidence thus invites reconsideration of the sociological argument that divination was less concerned with prediction than with social regulation and consensus (Parke 1967; Parker 2000 [1985]; Morgan 1989, 1990; Bowden 2005). The Chinese evidence makes it clear that we cannot reduce the social function of divination to consensus and regulation. It presents clear interest in both prediction and verification as early as the oracle bone inscriptions.

In conclusion, we can identify two coexisting tendencies in Chinese and Greek religion and divination. One was towards empirical procedures that relied on observation, was refined by experience, and whose pragmatic value was predictive. The other was towards a symbolic mode of discourse that provided normative advice or social consensus, whose procedures were religious and ritual, which understood phenomena as correspondences between macrocosm and microcosm, and whose pragmatic value was rhetorical, social, and political.

Suggested Reading

For Chinese cosmology, religion, and mantic practices see especially Ngo Van Xuyet 2002 [1976], Graham 1991, Loewe 1994, Poo 1998, Chemla, Harper, and Kalinowski 1999, and Puett 2002. For Greek cosmology, religion, and divination, see especially Vernant 1974 and 1980 [1972], Price 1985, Parker 2000 [1985], Bowden 2005, Flower 2008, and Eidinow 2011 and 2013 [2007]. For comparative perspectives see Raphals 1992 and 2013, Detienne 2000, Lloyd 2002, Lloyd and Sivin 2002, Yu 2007, and King 2013. Considerations of gender in mantic practice are discussed in Maurizio 1995, Raphals 1998 and 2013, Eidinow 2012 and 2013 [2007], and Flower 2008. (This chapter does not attempt to cite all modern work on Greek divination. For a further selection on this topic, see, in this volume, Chapters 20 and 32.)

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